

STD & AIDS, Day 2: Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

Special Education: Secondary, Lesson #25

Student Learning Objectives:

To be able to...

1. Define STDs as sexually transmitted diseases (diseases you catch by having sexual contact with an infected person)
2. Understand how to avoid catching or transmitting an STD
3. Identify some symptoms which might indicate STDs
4. Identify people who are affected by STD diagnosis and who should be contacted afterwards

Materials Needed:

Transparencies - "STD - What does it Stand For", quote, and case study
Whiteboard or butcher paper and pens for brainstorming
One copy of the worksheet for each student

Agenda:

1. What does STD mean?
2. How do you get an STD?
3. How do you avoid getting or giving an STD?
4. Who can get or give or STDs?
5. Different kinds of STDs
6. Symptoms of STDs
7. Who needs to know if you have an STD?
8. Case study
9. Summary

Students have already explored the concept of germs and disease. This lesson discusses germs passed through sexual contact. Some STDs are very serious, others more of a nuisance; some have symptoms, others don't. It is important for students to know it is possible to avoid or reduce the risk of exposure to STDs.

Background for teacher: The outdated term *venereal disease* (VD) should no longer be used. In some medical circles, the preferred term is now *sexually transmitted infection* (STI). Infection is used instead of disease because many infections don't cause disease; they are asymptomatic and don't always cause adverse reactions. But the term is less widely recognized by the public than STD. Some professionals now prefer the term *reproductive tract infection* (RTI), because not all the ailments in our genitals are transmitted sexually. But this leaves out oral and anal manifestations of diseases. This curriculum uses the term *sexually transmitted disease* (STD) to describe all the kinds of organisms that are frequently or exclusively communicated through oral, anal and/or vaginal sex.

Activities:

“A disease you catch by having sex with someone who already has it.”

1. What does STD mean?

Use Transparency 1 to show students what the letters STD stand for.

- Sexually (by having sex with an infected person)
- Transmitted (how you catch it, how the germ travels)
- Disease (the sickness or illness)

Optional Variation: Block out the right hand side of this transparency, make copies and use as a student worksheet. Discuss other acronyms for STDs, i.e., STI and RTI, because websites, doctors or nurses may use these terms. Explain that, for this lesson, we'll use the term STD to avoid confusion.

2. How do you get an STD?

- A. Ask students how people get STDs. Elaborate on, or clarify their answers.
- B. *“By having sexual intercourse with someone who has one – even though that person may not know it. STD germs **aren't** passed by coughing or sneezing or even hugging. They can only get into the body through the skin on certain parts of the body - the vagina, the urethra, the mouth, and the anus. During sexual intercourse when the penis is in the vagina or anus or mouth, or when someone's mouth is on another person's labia, STD germs can be passed.”*
- C. Point out that, especially, *unprotected* (no condom) sex is a risk.
- D. Point out that sexual intercourse with an infected person is not the *only* way that some STDs are spread. Other types of touching can spread some kinds of STDs as well. (e.g. self-inoculation from oral herpes if someone touched a cold sore on their mouth and didn't wash their hands, and then touched their

- penis or labia while they were going to the bathroom)
Some are passed by direct blood contact, too. If a woman is pregnant, for instance, she can pass the virus / 'germ' that causes AIDS (HIV) to the fetus/baby during birth or breastfeeding. However, new research shows drug treatments can be effective in preventing the spread of HIV during pregnancy.^{1,2} And make sure students realize that, for women who don't have HIV, it is very healthy to breastfeed.
- “Don't have sex.”**
- “Use a condom if you do have sex.”**
- “Birth control pills do not protect against STDs.”**
- Be sure students understand that HIV is one type of STD.**
- 3. How do you avoid getting an STD?**
- A. Abstinence (not having sex of any kind, including oral, anal, and vaginal) is the only 100% effective way of preventing STDs from spreading.
- B. Other ways to keep from getting an STD are to get Hepatitis B and HPV vaccines, use condoms properly, to have only one sexual partner (only one person you have intercourse with), and to have regular STD check-ups. Touching each other – using only hands -- can reduce the risk of STDs as well. [For current failure rates of contraception and which ones protect against STDs (not all do), see Planned Parenthood website.³]
- 4. Who can get STDs?**
- A. Ask the class, "Who can get STDs?" Elaborate on, or clarify their answers.
- B. Explain that *anyone* who has sexual contact with an infected person can get STDs - if the person they are having sex with happens to have one. And reiterate that that person may not know they have one.
- 5. Different kinds of STDs**
- Explain that there are many different kinds of STDs. Ask students to brainstorm some of the names of STDs they have heard of. Teacher Note: Pronunciation guides (non-technical) are provided for your use. Their list might include:
- HIV/AIDS
 - Herpes (hur'-peez)
 - Gonorrhea (gaw-no-ree'-uh)
 - Syphilis (siff'-uh-lus)
 - Chlamydia (clah-mid'-ee-uh)
 - Genital Warts or human papilloma virus
 - Pubic Lice
 - Trichomonas (trick-uh-moan'-us)
- 6. How do you know if you have an STD?**
- A. Ask the class, "How do you know if you have an STD?" Elaborate on, or clarify their answers.
- B. Some people get symptoms. What is a symptom? How do

you know you are sick? Discuss the concept of symptoms. Compare to a cold - how can you tell if you have a cold? You sneeze, perhaps get a fever, become tired or get a sore throat, need more rest. Could you have cold germs but not get sick ... and still be able to give someone else a cold? Sure.

- C. Sometimes, people notice something unusual happening in their bodies that might make them wonder if something is wrong - if they might have an STD. Common symptoms of STDs include:
- discharge (something unusual coming out of the penis, vagina or anus)
 - sores on your penis, labia, or anus
 - pain or burning when urinating
 - rash or itching
 - lumps or bumps
 - fever
 - unexplained weight loss
- D. Some people **don't** have symptoms. Emphasize that many STDs don't have noticeable symptoms. For example, with Chlamydia, the most common bacterial STD, as many as 50% of men and 70% of women have no symptoms when they have the disease.⁴
- E. If a person doesn't have symptoms, then the only way they'll know that they have an STD is if the person they had sex with is brave enough to tell them or if they get a check-up and a doctor tells them.

The basic rule is, "If you feel sick, or you've had unprotected sex, talk to a doctor or go to a clinic. Even if you feel healthy and see nothing unusual around your genitals, you can still have an STD."

Who needs to know?

1. Doctor
 2. Anyone you had sex with.
- Role-play using dolls**

7. What should you do if you have a symptom?

- A. Ask students what they think they should do if they ever do have one of these symptoms or if their boyfriend or girlfriend or husband or wife gets symptoms.
- B. Project Transparency 2 ("If in doubt, check it out") and ask students to explain what it means. Discuss people they could talk to if they had a concern or a question (doctor, nurse, school clinic, public health department clinic, a trusted adult or family member).

8. Who needs to know if you have an STD?

- A. Discuss with students who would need to know if a person has an STD. At a minimum, the infected person should tell a doctor or nurse, and any sexual partners.
- B. Discuss the reasons why these people need to know - to get treatment or help to prevent further infection - if they have unprotected sex with other people they could spread the STD.
- C. Some teens find that it really helps to talk with a parent or guardian. Especially if you want them to go to the doctor *with* you. The law says you don't have to. And the clinic

won't call your family. But some people's families are really helpful when they are dealing with something like an STD.

9. Case Study

- D. Read the following case study to your class.
"Mary and Joe had been dating for three years. One night they decided to have sex. They didn't use protection (a condom). They took a very unsafe risk. Several days later, Joe had painful burning when he urinated (went "pee"). He also noticed a funny white discharge coming from his penis. Joe was quite worried."
- E. Ask the class what Joe should do. Joe should go see a doctor and get his symptoms checked out.
- F. *Joe decided to go see Dr. Smith. He was tested for STDs and was told that he had gonorrhea. He was given a prescription for some medicine to treat this STD. Dr. Smith also told Joe that he should stop having sex for at least a week and tell his sexual partner that he had gonorrhea. That way, if she had caught it while they were having sex, she could get treatment as well. Joe felt uncomfortable talking about it. He didn't really want to bring it up with Mary. He didn't want her to be mad at him.*
- G. Ask the class what Joe should do.
Joe should tell Mary. It's VERY important. Gonorrhea can lead to infertility (inability to have children), complicate pregnancies, and cause chronic pain. It can also be cured with medicine. If Mary knows, then she can be tested and get treatment if she has an STD.
- H. **Also, both Mary and Joe should stop having sex** and wait until at least one week after they have both been treated to have sex again.
They should tell any other sex partners they have had in the last 60 days. That way those people can be tested and treated as well.
Also, they should expect to get a telephone call from the health department to help them get their partners treated. Anything they tell the person from the health department is completely confidential; the health department won't tell anyone else about Mary's or Joe's STD. They will also not tell Mary anything Joe shared and vice versa.
- I. Remind students that Joe didn't **want** to talk with Mary about it. Ask students why it may be difficult for people to talk about STDs. [Many people are embarrassed talking about sex at all. Or they may feel guilty, "dirty", or ashamed. People may fear the relationship will end, or rumors will be spread. These are real fears and should be addressed.]
- J. Make three columns on the board: pros, cons, and solutions. Have students list as you write on the board, pros

and cons of Joe telling Mary. Use the third column to list together ways to make it easier for Joe to talk with Mary (e.g., he could practice talking to her with a friend or doctor, he could tell her he wants her not to get sick because he cares about her). Teacher's Note: According to Washington state law (other states may differ), you must tell your partner that you have an STD before having sex, if you know you have one.

- J. *Joe told Mary that he had been diagnosed with Gonorrhea. He explained to her that it was a serious disease and that it was important to get medical treatment. He told her that she should get tested to see if she had it, too. He felt kind of awkward talking about it, but Mary was glad that he had told her, before an undiagnosed STD situation got really bad. Mary went to see her doctor the next week and was tested for gonorrhea. She found out that she was infected with the STD and needed treatment just like Joe. Joe and Mary stopped having sex for another week. They took their medicine and their gonorrhea got better. They were glad they had talked about it, were tested, and received treatment."*

10. Summary

Hand out the worksheet. Have students complete it in small groups or individually. Discuss the three points on the worksheet as a summary activity for this lesson.

Dear Trusted Adult,

In class we talked about Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). We learned about how people catch STDs (by having sexual contact with an infected person), about symptoms (and the fact that sometimes there are no symptoms), and about the importance of getting help if a person thinks they might have an STD.

You can support this learning by discussing the following statements and deciding together whether they are true or false. (Answers are at the bottom of the page).

1. STD means the same thing as VD. (true/false)
2. Only dirty people get STDs. (true/false)
3. You can get an STD and not have any symptoms. (true/false)
4. Some STDs are nuisances but are not really dangerous. (true/false)
5. Only people who have sex with a lot of people can get STDs. (true/false)
6. You might not know you had an STD unless the doctor, your boyfriend/ girlfriend, or husband /wife told you. (true/false)
7. The most common symptoms of STDs are sores, itching or burning, warts or bumps on the genitals, and an unusual discharge. (true/false)
8. People with STDs look different than people without STDs. (true/false)
9. You can lower your chances of giving or getting an STD by
 - a. being a nice person (true/false)
 - b. taking a bath or shower every day (true/false)
 - c. not having sex (true/false)
 - d. cuddling instead of having intercourse (true/false)
 - e. getting regular, thorough STD check-ups by a doctor (true/false)

If you have any questions or comments, please call me.

Sincerely,

Teacher, Principal or Nurse

NOTE: All Trusted Adult Exercises are Optional.

Answers: 1T, 2F (Anyone can get one, even from someone who seems clean, if that person happens to have one. Thinking like that can make a person too ashamed to go to the doctor.) 3T, 4T (And others are *very* serious.), 5F (It only takes once.), 6T, 7T, 8F (You can't tell by looking at a person.), 9c,d,e

Transparency 1: S.T.D. ... What does it mean?

S	Sexually (by having sex with an infected person)
T	Transmitted (how you catch it, how the germ is spread)
D	Disease (the illness or sickness)

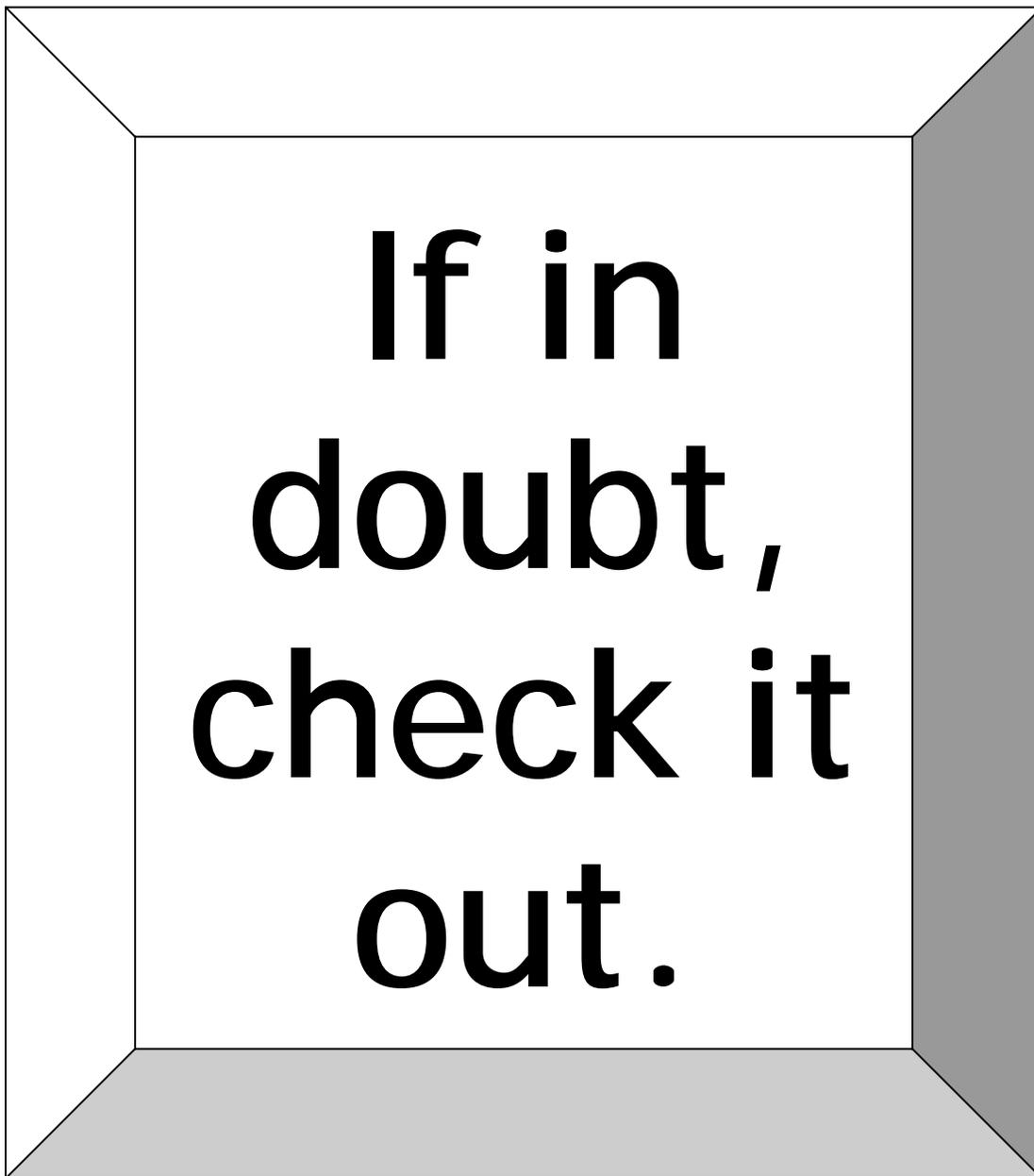
Sometimes, you will hear:

R	Reproductive (how babies are made)
T	Tract (tube or location)
I	Infection (germ that makes you sick)

Or

S	Sexually
T	Transmitted
I	Infection

Transparency 2: What to Do



STDs: Summary Worksheet

1. What do the letters STD stand for?

S _____

T _____

D _____

2. What should a person do if he or she had a symptom?

3. Who needs to know if a person has a STD?

Transparency 3: Joe



It burns when Joe goes to the bathroom.

Transparency 4: The Doctor



Dr. Smith was really nice.

Transparency 5: Joe & Mary Talk



Mary was glad he told her.

REFERENCES:

1. Katz A. The evolving art of caring for pregnant women with HIV infection. *Journal of Obstetrics Gynecology and Neonatal Nursing*. 2003 Jan – Feb; 32(1): 102-8.
2. Semprini AE, Fiore S. HIV and pregnancy: is the outlook for mother and baby transformed? *Current Opinions on Obstetrics and Gynecology*. 2004 Dec; 16(6): 471-5.
3. Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Comparison Of Effectiveness: Number of Pregnancies per 100 Women During First Year of Use. Updated April 2005. Available at: <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/pp2/portal/files/portal/medicalinfo/birthcontrol/pub-birth-control-02.xml>. Accessed: February 4, 2006.
4. CDC. Chlamydia screening among sexually active young female enrollees of health plans--United States, 1999-2001. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*. 2004 Oct 29;53(42):983-5.