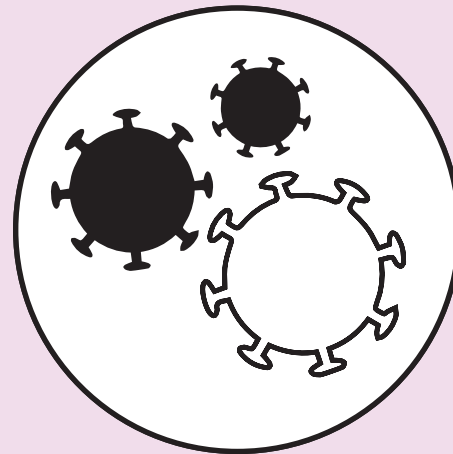
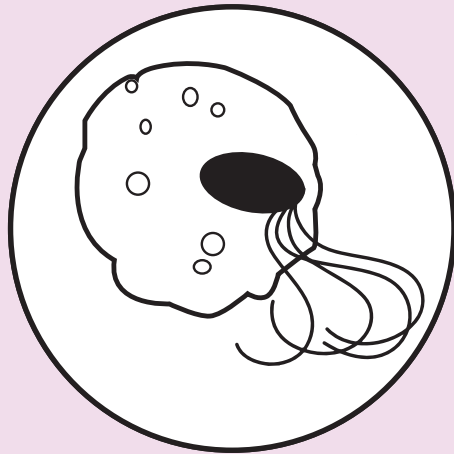
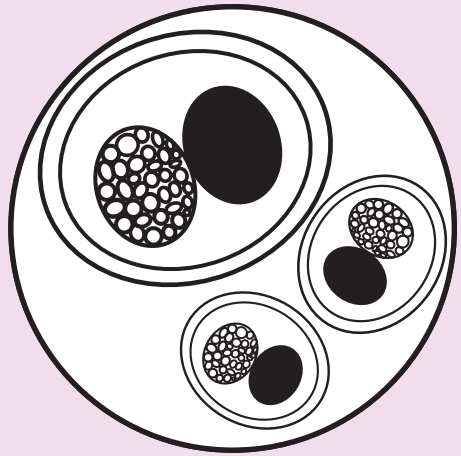




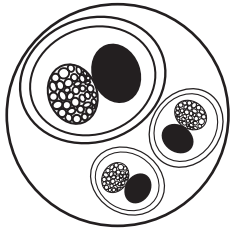
Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs)

A guide for youth and community workers



Contents

| | | | |
|---|----|--|----|
| Chlamydia bacterial infection | 3 | Hepatitis C (Hep C) viral infection | 11 |
| Gonorrhoea bacterial infection | 4 | Genital Herpes/ Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV) viral infection | 12 |
| Syphilis bacterial infection | 5 | Genital Warts/ Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) viral infection | 13 |
| Trichomonas (Trich) parasitic infection | 6 | Thrush - Candida/yeast infection fungal infection | 14 |
| Pubic lice (crabs) parasitic infection | 7 | Bacterial Vaginosis (BV) changes in normal vaginal bacteria | 15 |
| Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) viral infection | 8 | | |
| Hepatitis A (Hep A) viral infection | 9 | | |
| Hepatitis B (Hep B) viral infection | 10 | | |



Chlamydia

bacterial infection

How it is passed on

- Vaginal, anal or oral sex (usually via semen or vaginal fluids).
- During childbirth.

Symptoms

Most people have no symptoms. If symptoms are present, they can include:

People with a vagina: unusual vaginal discharge; abnormal bleeding; pain during sex; stinging or burning when urinating; lower abdominal pain.

People with a penis: redness at the opening of the penis; stinging or burning when urinating; discharge from the penis; testicular pain.

Testing

- Generally a urine test or vaginal swab (can be self-collected).
- May need an anal or throat swab (can be self-collected).

Treatment

Cured by antibiotics.

What can happen if it is not treated

- Infertility, chronic pelvic pain, increased risk of ectopic pregnancy.
- Pregnancy complications (miscarriage, premature birth, low birth weight).
- Serious health complications for newborns (e.g. lung and eye infections).

Prevention

- Condom use.
- Testing and treatment.
- After treatment, avoid sex until a week after self and partner/s are treated.
- Retesting after three months is recommended.

Gonorrhoea

bacterial infection

How it is passed on

- Vaginal, anal or oral sex (usually via semen or vaginal fluids).
- During childbirth.

Treatment

Cured by antibiotics.

Symptoms

People with a vagina: Most have no symptoms. If symptoms are present, they can include: unusual vaginal discharge or anal discharge; abnormal bleeding; pain during sex or when urinating; lower abdominal pain; sore throat.

People with a penis: Most have symptoms which can include: discharge from the penis or anus; pain when urinating; testicular pain; sore throat.

What can happen if it is not treated

- Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), risk of ectopic pregnancy, and infertility.
- Pregnancy complications (miscarriage, premature birth, low birth weight).
- Serious health complications for newborns (e.g. severe eye infection).

Testing

- Generally a urine test or vaginal swab (can be self-collected).
- May need an anal or throat swab (can be self-collected).

Prevention

- Condom use.
- Testing and treatment.
- After treatment, avoid sex until a week after self and partner/s are treated.
- Retesting after three months is recommended.

Syphilis

bacterial infection

How it is passed on

- Vaginal, anal or oral sex (via skin to skin contact with the infected area).
- During pregnancy.

Symptoms

Often no symptoms. If symptoms are present, they can include:

First stage (primary syphilis) - a painless ulcer in the genital area or mouth.

Second stage (secondary syphilis) - rash on the back, chest, palms, soles or body; sores in the mouth, vagina or anus; fever; swollen lymph glands; patchy hair loss; general tiredness.

Testing

- Blood test.
- Swab from the sore (if present).

Treatment

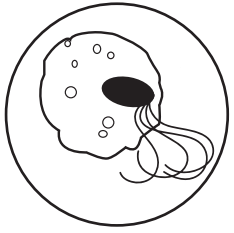
Cured by antibiotics.

What can happen if it is not treated

- Serious damage to the brain, nervous system, heart, eyes or other organs.
- Pregnancy complications (miscarriage, stillbirth, serious harm or death of the baby i.e. congenital syphilis).

Prevention

- Condom use.
- Testing and treatment.
- Testing in pregnancy is very important.



Trichomonas (Trich)

parasitic infection

How it is passed on

Vaginal sex (usually via semen or vaginal fluids).

Treatment

Cured by antibiotics.

Symptoms

People with a vagina: Often no symptoms. If symptoms are present, they can include: unusual vaginal discharge; odour; vulval or vaginal itching or burning.

People with a penis: Most have no symptoms. If symptoms are present, they can include: discharge from the penis; pain when urinating.

What can happen if it is not treated

- Pregnancy complications (miscarriage, premature birth, low birth weight).

Testing

- Vaginal swab (can be self-collected).
- Urine test.

Prevention

- Condom use.
- After treatment, avoid sex until a week after self and partner/s are treated.

Pubic lice (crabs)

parasitic infection

How it is passed on

- Close body contact.
- Shared towels, bedding, clothing etc.

Symptoms

- Itching, irritation, and inflammation in the pubic area.
- Visible eggs or lice.

Testing

- Diagnosed by observation.

Treatment

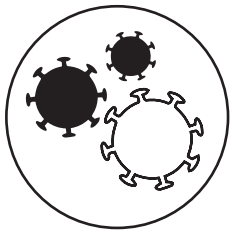
Treated with insecticide lotions or shampoos.

What can happen if it is not treated

No serious consequences.

Prevention

- Avoiding sexual contact or sharing bedding or clothing with anyone who has pubic lice.



Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

viral infection

How it is passed on

- Vaginal, anal or oral sex (via semen, vaginal fluids or blood).
- Blood to blood contact, such as sharing injecting, piercing or tattooing equipment.
- During pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding.

Symptoms

Many people have no symptoms.

Shortly after infection some people have flu-like symptoms such as fever; headaches; tiredness; rash; swollen glands.

Years later (if untreated) may develop multiple symptoms which can include: weight loss; skin infections; diarrhoea; fatigue; night sweats.

Testing

- Blood test.
- Self-testing (finger prick blood test).

Treatment

Antiretroviral treatment - can reduce HIV levels (viral load) to undetectable.

Does not cure HIV, but people with HIV can now live long, healthy lives without passing on HIV.

What can happen if it is not treated

If untreated, after some years the immune system may become seriously damaged, and severe symptoms and illnesses can occur - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

Prevention

- Condom use.
- Testing and treatment.
- U=U (Undetectable Equals Untransmissible) - no risk of HIV transmission from sex with someone on HIV treatment with an undetectable viral load (the risk of transmission is reduced for blood to blood contact).
- PrEP (Pre-exposure prophylaxis) - regular use (daily or on demand) of HIV medication by someone who doesn't have HIV to prevent them from getting HIV.
- Not sharing any injecting equipment.
- Avoiding backyard tattooists and piercers, using shops that follow proper sterile procedures.
- PEP (Post-exposure prophylaxis) - one month of HIV medication started within three days of high risk exposure.

Hepatitis A (Hep A)

viral infection

How it is passed on

- Usually by consuming contaminated food or water.
- Direct contact with an infected person (faecal-oral transmission).
- Can be passed on by oral-anal sex.

Symptoms

Can have no, mild or severe symptoms.

If symptoms are present, they can include: feeling unwell; aches and pains; fever; nausea; loss of appetite; dark urine; jaundice (yellow eyes and skin).

Testing

- Blood test.

Treatment

No specific treatment.

Clears up on its own in a few weeks.

Rest, plenty of fluids, eating small meals more often and avoiding alcohol.

What can happen if it is not treated

Almost everyone recovers completely, and is then immune.

Prevention

- Vaccination.
- Hand hygiene.
- Dams for oral-anal sex.
- Treatment with hep A vaccine or hep A immunoglobulin within two weeks of exposure can prevent infection.

Hepatitis B (Hep B)

viral infection

How it is passed on

- Vaginal, anal or oral sex (via semen, vaginal fluids or blood).
- Blood to blood contact, such as sharing injecting, piercing, tattooing or personal care equipment (e.g. razors, toothbrushes, nail clippers).
- During childbirth.

Symptoms

Often no symptoms.

If symptoms are present, they can include: feeling unwell; fatigue; aches and pains; loss of appetite; nausea; dark urine; jaundice.

Testing

- Blood test.

Treatment

Not everyone needs treatment.

Antiviral treatment can manage ongoing hep B and help prevent liver damage, but not cure it.

What can happen if it is not treated

Most people recover completely and are then immune.

About 5-10% of people who get hep B as adults have ongoing infection (more likely if contracted when young), and may develop chronic liver disease, liver failure or cancer of the liver.

Prevention

- Vaccination.
- Condom use.
- Testing.
- Not sharing any injecting equipment.
- Avoiding backyard tattooists and piercers, using shops that follow proper sterile procedures.
- Avoiding other blood to blood contact.
- Treatment with hep B vaccine and hep B immunoglobulin within three days of exposure can prevent infection.
- Giving newborn babies immunoglobulin and hep B vaccine within 12 hours of birth can prevent transmission from a parent with hep B.

Hepatitis C (Hep C)

viral infection

How it is passed on

- Blood to blood contact, such as sharing injecting, piercing, tattooing or personal care equipment (e.g. razors, toothbrushes, nail clippers).
- Low risk of transmission during sex.
- Low risk of transmission during childbirth.

Symptoms

Some people have a flu-like illness shortly after infection. Usually no symptoms for many years.

Later, symptoms can include: feeling unwell; fatigue; aches and pains; loss of appetite; nausea; dark urine; jaundice.

Testing

- Blood test.

Treatment

Very good antiviral treatments are now available, curing hep C for over 95% of people.

What can happen if it is not treated

If untreated, some people develop chronic liver disease and a small number may develop cirrhosis, liver failure or cancer of the liver.

Prevention

- No vaccine.
- Not sharing any injecting equipment.
- Avoiding backyard tattooists and piercers, using shops that follow proper sterile procedures.
- Avoiding other blood to blood contact.

Genital Herpes/Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV)

viral infection

How it is passed on

- Skin to skin contact, usually during vaginal, anal or oral sex.
- During childbirth.

Treatment

Antiviral medication can reduce pain, severity and frequency of outbreaks.

Symptoms

Most people have no symptoms.

Some people have painful tingling or itching blisters or ulcers in the genital or anal area which can recur.

Some people have a flu-like illness with the first episode. Genital symptoms can be quite severe.

What can happen if it is not treated

- Generally no serious complications.
- Some people experience emotional or relationship issues - counselling can help.
- In pregnancy - a risk to the baby if there are active lesions at time of delivery.

Testing

- Swab from lesions.
- Blood tests in some cases (not a routine test).

Prevention

- Condom and dam use may reduce the risk (provides protection where the skin is covered).
- In pregnancy - if there are active lesions at the time of birth, delivery may be via Caesarean.

Genital Warts/Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)

viral infection

How it is passed on

- Skin to skin contact, usually during vaginal, anal or oral sex.
- During childbirth.

Treatment

Visible warts can be treated with lotions, creams, freezing, diathermy or laser.

They will go away eventually without treatment.

Symptoms

Most people have no symptoms.

Some have lumpy growths on the genital, mouth or anal area.

Symptoms can take months to appear. They may go away and re-appear.

What can happen if it is not treated

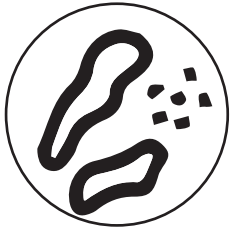
- Genital warts are caused by specific strains of Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). Other strains of genital HPV can cause cancer of the cervix, throat and penis.
- Not usually a serious problem and the immune system usually clears the virus over 1-2 years. Before a vaccination was available, 80% of people were infected at some time with at least one type of HPV.

Testing

- Usually diagnosed by observation.

Prevention

- Vaccination (HPV vaccine).
- Regular cervical screening.



Thrush - Candida/yeast infection

fungal infection

How it is passed on

- Not generally sexually transmitted.
- Common condition caused by an overgrowth of yeasts in the vagina.
- Can occur for no obvious reason. More likely with pregnancy, antibiotics or diabetes.

Treatment

Treated with vaginal pessaries/creams or oral tablets, available over the counter from the chemist.

If it persists after treatment, see a health professional to confirm it is thrush.

Symptoms

Yeast commonly lives in the vagina without causing problems.

Symptoms can include: itching, burning or soreness of the vulva/vagina; thick white or yellow vaginal discharge; discomfort or pain when urinating or sex.

What can happen if it is not treated

- Does not need treatment unless it is causing problems.
- If it keeps recurring, see a doctor for longer term treatment (to help avoid ongoing vulval pain and sexual problems).

Testing

- Often diagnosed by examination.
- Confirmed by vaginal swab (can be self-collected).

Prevention

- Genital skin care may help.
See <https://shq.org.au/download/genital-skin-care/?wpdmdl=1893>



Bacterial Vaginosis (BV)

changes in normal vaginal bacteria

How it is passed on

- Not generally sexually transmitted.
- Common condition caused by a change in the normal balance of bacteria in the vagina.

Treatment

Antibiotics, usually tablets, but sometimes vaginal gel or cream.
Often recurs.

Symptoms

Often no symptoms. Symptoms can include: unpleasant vaginal odour; abnormal vaginal discharge; vaginal discomfort.

Symptoms may be more noticeable after sex or during a period.

What can happen if it is not treated

- Does not need treatment unless it is causing symptoms (or during pregnancy, or before an IUD insertion or termination of pregnancy).
- Pregnancy complications (miscarriage, premature birth, low birth weight).

Testing

- Vaginal swab (can be self-collected).

Prevention

- Condom and dam use may reduce chance of BV recurring.

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SHQ is on Whadjuk land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country across Australia.

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