SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS
STI’S
BEING SEXUALLY ACTIVE

• Managing our health during adolescence means becoming aware of the link between health risks.
• Using drugs and alcohol can impair our ability to make wise decisions about sex, as well as bring us into contact with blood borne viruses like hepatitis and HIV.
• We must consider that participating in a culture involved with drug use and casual sex multiplies our personal risk of impact by illness and disease.
BEING SEXUALLY ACTIVE

• Sexually transmissible infections (STIs) are common all around the world.

• They may be caused by bacteria, viruses or parasites. You may think that only other people get STIs and that you are not at risk of catching one, but anybody who is sexually active can be infected if they do not practice safe sex.

• You can’t tell just by looking at a person that they have an STI. If you have unprotected sex with a person infected with an STI, you are at high risk of catching that infection.
STI’S—WHAT ARE THEY?

• Sexually transmitted diseases or sexually transmitted infections are any diseases that are passed from one person to another by sexual contact. This includes all forms of penetrative sex (oral, vaginal and anal) as well as some forms of foreplay such as genital touching.

• Some STIs can be passed through skin-to-skin contact; others require contact with infected body fluids such as blood, saliva, vaginal secretions or semen. Some STIs can be passed from mother to child during birth.
STI’S-WHAT ARE THEY?

- STIs can be caused by viruses (for instance the HIV virus that causes AIDS), bacteria (such as chlamydia and gonorrhea), while others can be caused by parasites such as pubic lice.

- Many STIs (such as the more common ones like chlamydia) are known as the Silent Infections, because you may be infected but not have any symptoms such as genital sores. Because you may not know whether you or your partner has an STI, it is best to use barrier methods eg male or female condoms and dams (for safer oral sex),* and to have regular check-ups at your doctor or family planning clinic.
The most common sexual activities that can spread an STI from one partner to another include:

- **Vaginal sex** – the man’s penis in the woman’s vagina.
- **Anal sex** – the man’s penis in the partner’s anus (the partner can be either male or female).
- **Oral sex** – the man’s penis in the partner’s mouth, or the partner’s mouth or tongue in the woman’s vagina.
STI’S - HIGH RISK ACTIVITIES

• Having vaginal or anal sex without a condom (unprotected sex) can put you at risk of getting an STI.
• You can also get some STIs from unprotected oral sex.
• Some activities put you at greater risk than others. Riskier activities include unprotected sex:
  • with casual partners (the more partners, the greater the risk)
  • with a partner who has had unprotected sex with casual partners
  • when travelling outside Australia
  • with a person who has had unprotected sex outside Australia
  • with a partner who has injected drugs
STI’S

• Sexually transmissible infections include:
  • Chlamydia
  • Genital warts
  • Gonorrhoea
  • Syphilis
  • Genital Herpes
  • Scabies
  • Pubic Lice (crabs)
  • Hepatitis
  • HIV (the virus that causes AIDS)
### Chlamydia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Prevention</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bacteria spread through vaginal, oral or anal sex</td>
<td>Unusual discharge from vagina or penis; pain urinating</td>
<td>Avoid sharing sexual partners. Always use a condom</td>
<td>Antibiotics and sex-free period</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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# GENITAL HERPES

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Herpes simplex virus II is spread through vaginal, oral or anal sex or skin contact</td>
<td>Small blisters appear, burst and become ulcers or sores. Scabs form and finally the skin heals (after 1–2 weeks)</td>
<td>Avoid sharing sexual partners. Always use a condom.</td>
<td>The drug Acyclovir will ease symptoms such as pain, and decrease tendency for further outbreaks. However, genital herpes cannot be cured.</td>
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### GENITAL WARTS

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human papilloma virus (virus)</td>
<td>Warts may occur on the cervix or the urethra. Warts can also grow around the genitals, mouth or throat</td>
<td>Avoid sharing sexual partners. Always use a condom</td>
<td>Liquid nitrogen or laser treatment to burn the warts off</td>
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</table>

**Genital warts:**
- Found on shaft of penis (male), vagina, vulva, cervix (female), and around anus
**PUBIC LICE-CRABS**

**Description:**
Pubic lice are small, flat, light-brown parasites that cling to pubic hair and suck blood for nourishment. Blood sucking from pubic lice can cause small red areas or sores and itching. Pubic lice are usually sexually transmitted through direct skin-to-skin contact, including sexual activity. However, they can also be spread by contact with towels, undergarments and bedding of an infected person.

**Symptoms:**
The main symptom is itching of the affected area. This is often worse at night. Lice and nits (eggs from the lice) can sometimes be seen, especially stuck to the pubic hairs. Some people have no symptoms and may be unaware of the lice infestation.

**Prevention:**
Condoms do not protect you against pubic lice as direct skin-to-skin contact still occurs. Therefore if there is any suspicion who may be infected it is important to seek medical advice and get tested for other sexually transmissible infections.

**Treatment:**
Topical creams or lotions containing permethrin and applied to the affected area are the most commonly recommended treatment. See your doctor, pharmacist or sexual health centre for further advice.

Any sexual partners you have had over the last month will need to be examined and treated. Current sexual partners should be treated at the same time that you are.
## GONORRHOEAE

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neisseria gonorrhoeae (bacteria)</td>
<td>Unusual discharge from the vagina or penis. Pain when having sex or passing urine</td>
<td>Avoid sharing sexual partners. Always use a condom</td>
<td>Antibiotics course, followed by a repeat test to ensure the infection is cured</td>
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Gonorrhea Bacteria
## Syphilis

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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treponema pallidum (bacteria)</td>
<td>Ulcer or sore around, or in the genitalia area or around or in the mouth, appears 3–4 weeks after infection. Enlarged lymph glands, a flat, red rash on the face, palms of hands or soles of feet, headaches and joint pains 2–6 months after initial infection. Ten per cent of individuals who do not receive treatment progress to the third stage. This stage may result in serious complications of the brain and heart</td>
<td>Avoid sharing sexual partners. Always use a condom</td>
<td>Antibiotics course, followed by a repeat test to ensure the infection is cured</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blood borne viruses</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Symptoms</td>
<td>Prevention</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hepatitis A</strong></td>
<td>An infection of the liver—spread through food, water, blood and body fluids</td>
<td>Fatigue, nausea, vomiting, pain in the liver area, dark urine or lightly-coloured stools and fever</td>
<td>Avoid sharing food, drink, sexual partners; snorting straws and using needles; always use a condom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hepatitis B</strong></td>
<td>An infection of the liver—spread by sharing needles, snorting straws, unprotected sex; can be spread from mother to baby at birth</td>
<td>Fever, vomiting, jaundice (yellowing) of the eyes and/or skin; dark-coloured urine, light stool (sometimes white), aches in muscles and joints</td>
<td>Avoid sharing snorting straws and using needles, and sexual partners; always use a condom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hepatitis C</strong></td>
<td>An infection of the liver—spread by sharing needles, snorting straws, unprotected sex; can be spread from mother to baby at birth</td>
<td>80 per cent of people with the disease do not have symptoms. May appear years after infection as nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, jaundice (yellowing) of the eyes and/or skin, dark-coloured urine, light stool (sometimes white) aches in muscles and joints, cirrhosis</td>
<td>Avoid sharing needles and sexual partners; always use a condom</td>
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HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV)

- The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a retrovirus.
- This means that it is capable of taking over a cell’s reproduction centre and producing infected copies rather than healthy ones.
- HIV attacks the cells of our immune system, which is our body’s defence against disease.
- HIV progressively weakens the immune system, targeting a group of white blood cells called lymphocytes.
- As more and more CD4 cells (a type of lymphocyte) are destroyed, the body’s ability to fight infections and some forms of cancer becomes impaired.
HIV & AIDS

- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a life-threatening illness caused by infection with HIV.
- It is thought that all people infected with HIV will eventually contract AIDS.
- AIDS is the most advanced stage of HIV infection, it may take a long time for its signs and symptoms to appear.
# Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage one: Primary infection</strong></td>
<td>- initial infection (seroconversion) with HIV</td>
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<td>- some people display a ‘seroconversion illness’ with symptoms that could be mistaken for influenza or glandular fever</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- time frame: up to 12 weeks post infection</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Stage two: Asymptomatic infection</strong></td>
<td>- after initial infection, no signs or symptoms are present</td>
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<td>- time frame: 5–12 years depending on the individual and their response to treatments/medication</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Stage three: Persistent generalised lymphadenopathy</strong></td>
<td>- signs and symptoms of HIV infection appear</td>
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<td>- common symptoms include swelling of lymph glands and fatigue</td>
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<td>- time frame: several years, depending on the individual</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Stage four: AIDS defining stage</strong></td>
<td>- advanced disease or other diseases</td>
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<td>- individual has fewer than 200 CD4 cells</td>
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<td>- people experience more severe symptoms or contract one or more of a variety of opportunistic infections</td>
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3 MOST COMMON WAYS TO Transmit HIV

| Blood                        | sharing infected injecting equipment, such as syringes  
|                             | receiving infected blood through a transfusion; although blood donations have been screened in Australia since 1985, HIV may not be detected if the donation occurred during the early stages of infection (this risk is extremely small) |
| Sexual intercourse          | unprotected sexual intercourse may allow infected fluid to pass through lesions on the lining of the vagina, vulva or penis |
| Perinatally                 | infected blood of the mother shared with child during pregnancy or at the birth  
|                             | approximately 30% of infected mothers will pass the infection to their unborn child  
|                             | through the mother’s infected breast milk to child |
COMMON MYTHS ABOUT HIV TRANSMISSION

• HIV, like cancer, generates a great deal of fear in the community.
• When the virus first appeared in Australia there was widespread hysteria, based on an ignorance of how HIV can be transmitted.
• Some of the myths from that time still exist and may cause unnecessary anxiety and even discrimination.
• HIV **cannot** be passed on through:
  • exchange of saliva—kissing, sneezing, coughing, and sharing eating utensils
  • skin contact—hugging, shaking hands, coming in contact with sweat
  • casual contact—sharing towels, bedding, toilet seats, swimming pools
  • biting insects—mosquitoes, bed bugs.
• The virus is very fragile and dies quickly when exposed to the hostile environments outside the body.
QUESTIONS

1. Explain the links between blood borne viruses (hepatitis A, B & C), STIs and drug use.
2. Why has the rate of HIV infection dropped dramatically in Australia over the past decade?
3. Why do you think more than 90% of HIV-infected people live in the developing world?
4. What is it about the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) that makes it so difficult to defeat?
5. Why do you think that so many people are afraid of people with HIV?
6. What can be done to reduce this fear within the community?
7. Identify three ways you can reduce the incidence of HIV infection.
QUESTIONS

1. Suggest how people take risks with STIs.
2. Explain what a ‘reasonable’ degree of risk is when it comes to STIs.
3. Describe how men and women see risk and STIs differently.
4. Describe what contracting an STI does to a person’s idea of reasonable risk.
5. List the two protective strategies to avoid STIs.