

### Remember :

Many people do not know they are infected - they do not show any signs. If you have had unprotected sex, you may want to get tested for STDs. That's the only way to know for sure if you have one.

If you do have an STD, get treated right away.

### How do people get and spread STDs?

STDs are most often spread through sexual activity and sexual intercourse. Some also can be passed from pregnant women to their babies. Some people can get them by sharing needles used to inject drugs, steroids, vitamins, or other substances, or for tattoos or for ear piercing. HIV and hepatitis are STDs that can infect people who share needles for injecting, tattooing, and ear piercing.

Often, people can have an STD and not know it. Many times, their bodies do not show symptoms or signs. Even if signs appear, they may go away on their own, but the infection is still there until it is treated and it can be passed on to other people. Untreated STDs can make people very sick and unable to have children. This is true for both men and women.

### How are STDs treated?

Some STDs, such as gonorrhea and syphilis, can be cured with medicine. Others, such as HIV and hepatitis, are difficult to treat. STDs don't just go away, and they will damage your body.

If you think you might have an STD, you need to get checked by a doctor or clinic. You can go to your own doctor, to the special STD or HIV clinic at your local health department, or other community clinic. No matter where you go for help, Michigan law requires that your case be kept private.

### What is AIDS?

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. It is a disease caused by a virus called Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) that can destroy the body's ability to fight off illness. A person can have HIV infection for many years before becoming sick or developing AIDS. If a person has HIV and is not sick, the infection can still be passed to others.

### What are my HIV testing options?

To get tested for HIV infection, you can choose anonymous or confidential testing. Anonymous means you can get tested using a special number instead of your name. Confidential means that you give your name but your case is kept private. The law protects your privacy.

You can go to your own doctor, to the health department or other community clinic. If you go to your own doctor, you must use your name but your case will be kept private. To be tested without using your name, you have to visit a health department or other community clinic. Before you can be tested for HIV infection, you have to sign a consent form that says you talked to a professional about your risk and that you understand what an HIV test result means. If you are infected, you will be given information and referrals to help you get medical help. The health department will help you tell your sexual or needle-sharing partner about their exposure to HIV.

If you know you have HIV infection, Michigan Law requires you to tell anyone you are going to have sex with about your infection before you have sex. Failure to do so is a felony.

For more information about HIV/AIDS or HIV testing, STDs and prenatal care, call your local health department or community clinic. For more information on HIV/AIDS, call the toll-free Michigan AIDS hotline at 1-800-872-AIDS (2437).

Michigan Department of Community Health



Jennifer M. Granholm, Governor  
Janet Olszewski, Director

MDCH is an Equal Opportunity Employer, Services and Programs Provider.  
50,000 printed at \$.080 cents each with a total cost of \$3,976.60

012/07



# Sexually transmitted diseases HIV/AIDS Prenatal Care



Learn the facts

Because you care about each other

This pamphlet contains important information for couples considering marriage. In order to get a marriage license in Michigan, you must first receive written educational materials about sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), HIV/AIDS and prenatal care. Acting on this information may protect your health and the health of your spouse and children. Because you care about each other, both of you may choose to discuss these issues.

### What are Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)?

STDs are infections you get through having sex. They can infect many parts of your body, including your sex organs. STDs also are called VD (venereal disease) and other slang words. Some of the many STDs are gonorrhea, syphilis, hepatitis, chlamydia, herpes, genital warts, and HIV, the virus which causes AIDS.

### What are some common signs and symptoms of STDs?

Some of the most common signs of STDs for women are:

- discharge from the vagina, often smelly
- burning or pain when urinating
- urinating more often
- pain or cramps in the tummy area
- bleeding between periods or after sex
- heavier and more painful periods
- sores on vagina, anus or in mouth
- warts in or around vagina and anus

Some of the most common signs of STDs for men are:

- drip from the penis or stained underwear
- burning or pain when urinating
- urinating more often
- pain or swelling in testes
- warts on penis or anus
- sores on anus or in mouth

Women and men may experience:

- warts in throat
- rectal pain
- blood or pus in stool







## Why do I need to know about HIV/AIDS?

HIV/AIDS can affect your life and the life of your partner and your unborn children. HIV is one of the infections that can be spread between sex partners, through sharing needles, or from infected mothers to their children during pregnancy and birth.

## How do I know if I have HIV?

Getting an HIV test is the only way to find out if you have it. Many people believe you can have HIV infection for many years before it will show up on a test. *This is not true.*

Most people who become infected with HIV will usually show it on the test within three months from the time of infection.

It *is* true that you may not get sick for many years if you are infected. Knowing about your infection early and getting treatment may help you stay healthy longer. Remember, the only way to know if you have HIV infection is to be tested.

## How do you get HIV?

People get infected with HIV and pass the virus to others in three main ways: through sex, through blood-to-blood contact, and through birth from an infected mother to her child.

## How do you get HIV from sex?

You can get HIV infection by having sexual intercourse with an infected person whether you are male or female, and whether your sexual partners are male or female. This happens because HIV is in the semen or vaginal fluids of infected people and can enter the body through anal, vaginal, or oral intercourse. If you have another untreated STD, you could be at more risk for getting HIV if you are exposed to it. This is because your body's defenses may be weakened by the other infection.

## How do you get HIV from blood?

People with HIV have the virus in their blood. When sharing injection needles, infected blood can be trapped in the needle or syringe and then injected directly into the bloodstream of the next person who uses the needle. People can become infected by sharing needles and can give the virus to their sex partners and their unborn children, if the woman becomes infected. The risk of getting HIV from a blood transfusion is very low. All donated blood is now tested for HIV.

## How do babies get HIV from birth?

Babies can be born with HIV if the mother is infected. An infected woman can give HIV to her baby before it is born, during birth or through breast-feeding. The chance is approximately 25 percent that an infected pregnant woman will have an infected baby. Early treatment can make this risk much lower. Getting counseled and tested is the first step for an infected woman to increase the chance that her baby will be born without HIV infection. In Michigan, all pregnant women must be tested for HIV, hepatitis and other STDs by their health care providers. You may refuse testing. Other STDs, like hepatitis, also can be passed from an infected mother to an unborn child.

## Can you get HIV from everyday contact?

No. You won't get HIV through casual contact with people around you. You won't get HIV by:

- kissing (you can't get HIV from saliva)
- shaking hands
- hugging
- swimming in a pool or by using a hot tub
- using a public restroom
- eating in a restaurant

You won't get HIV by giving blood.

## How do HIV and STDs affect married people?

Married couples who are both uninfected, who have sex only with each other and who don't share needles to inject drugs are not likely to get HIV or STDs. Remember, many people who have HIV or STDs don't know that they are infected. You and your partner need to talk honestly about each other's sexual histories, STDs and the risks for HIV infection.

*Getting tested for HIV and other STDs is an important step when beginning a married life together.*

## How can STDs and HIV be prevented?

The best way to prevent STDs, including HIV, is to have sex with only one uninfected person who has sex with only you, and to not inject drugs. Condoms have been shown to be very good protection against the sexual spread of HIV and STDs. When using a condom, remember these guidelines:

1. Use condoms made of latex rubber, not lambskin. If you cannot use latex rubbers or if you have a latex allergy, polyurethane condoms are now available. Female condoms are another option.
2. Condom use is safest with a water-based lubricant. Do not use petroleum-based jelly, cold cream, baby oil, butter, margarine or cooking shortenings. These can weaken the latex rubber condom and cause it to break. Oil-based lubricants may be used only with polyurethane condoms.
3. Don't use illegal drugs, especially injected drugs. Many drug users are addicted and need to enter a drug treatment program as quickly as possible. The use of drugs, including alcohol and some illegally used prescription drugs, can cause people to make decisions that could put them at risk for HIV and STD infections.

## Is testing required to get a marriage license?

No tests are required for the marriage license. You may want to consider testing if you have had any STD or shared needles, or if you have had sex without using a condom. You may wish to consider testing if you have had sex with anyone who has done any of these things. If you do wish to be tested before getting married, be sure to ask your doctor or health care provider to explain your options, your rights and your responsibilities.

## What are my STD testing options?

To get tested for STDs, you can go to your own doctor, to the special STD clinic at your local health department, or other community clinic. If you have an STD, you will be treated so you do not get sicker and so you do not infect your partner. Your partner will have the opportunity to be tested and treated, too. Everything about your case will be kept private.