



## HIV/AIDS &amp; STDs

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## STDs and HIV – CDC Basic Fact Sheet



If you have a [sexually transmitted diseases \(STD\)](#), you are more likely to get HIV or transmit it to others. This fact sheet answers basic questions about STDs and HIV.

### Are some STDs associated with HIV?

Yes. In the United States, people who get syphilis, gonorrhea, and herpes often also have HIV, or are more likely to get HIV in the future.

### Why does having an STD put me more at risk for getting HIV?

If you get an STD, you are more likely to get HIV than someone who is STD-free. This is because the same behaviors and circumstances that may put you at risk for getting an STD also can put you at greater risk for getting HIV. In addition, having a sore or break in the skin from an STD may allow HIV to more easily enter your body. If you are sexually active, get tested for STDs and HIV regularly, even if you don't have symptoms.

### What activities can put me at risk for both STDs and HIV?

- Having anal, vaginal, or oral sex without a condom;
- Having multiple sex partners;
- Having anonymous sex partners;
- Having sex while under the influence of drugs or alcohol can lower inhibitions and result in greater sexual risk-taking.

### What can I do to prevent getting STDs and HIV?

The only 100% effective way to avoid STDs is to not have vaginal, anal, or oral sex. If you are sexually active, you can do the following things to lower your chances of getting STDs and HIV:

- Choose less risky sex activities;
- Use a new condom, [consistently and correctly](#), for every act of vaginal, anal, and oral sex throughout the *entire* sex act (from start to finish);
- Reduce the number of people with whom you have sex;
- Limit or eliminate drug and alcohol use before and during sex;
- Have an honest and open talk with your healthcare provider and ask whether you should be tested for STDs and HIV;
- Talk to your healthcare provider and find out if either [pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP](#), or [post-exposure prophylaxis, or PEP](#), is a good option for you to prevent HIV infection.

### If I already have HIV, and then I get an STD, does that put my sex partner(s) at an increased risk for getting HIV?

It can. If you already have HIV, and then get another STD, it can put your HIV-negative partners at greater risk of getting HIV from you.

Your sex partners are less likely to get HIV from you if you

- Get on and stay on treatment called [antiretroviral therapy \(ART\)](#). Taking HIV medicine as prescribed can make your viral load very low by reducing the amount of virus in your blood and body fluids. HIV medicine can make your viral load so low that a test can't detect it (an undetectable viral load). If your viral load stays undetectable, you have effectively no risk of sexually transmitting HIV to HIV-negative partners, even if you have other STDs.
- Choose less risky sex activities.
- Use a new condom, consistently and correctly, for every act of vaginal, anal, and oral sex throughout the *entire* sex act (from start to finish).


The risk of getting HIV also may be reduced if your partner takes PrEP medications, as prescribed, after discussing this option with his or her healthcare provider and determining whether it is appropriate. When taken as prescribed, PrEP medications are highly effective for preventing HIV from sex. PrEP is much less effective if it is not taken consistently. Since PrEP does not protect against other STDs, use condoms [the right way](#) every time you have sex.

### Will treating STDs prevent me from getting HIV?

No. It's not enough.

If you get treated for an STD, this will help to prevent its complications, and prevent spreading STDs to your sex partners. Treatment for an STD other than HIV does not prevent the spread of HIV.

If you are diagnosed with an STD, talk to your doctor about ways to protect yourself and your partner(s) from getting reinfected with the same STD, or getting HIV.

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