SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

What Are They?
Sexually transmitted infections (STIs), also called STDs, are spread mainly through sexual contact, including vaginal, anal, oral, or manual sex. STIs can also spread via pregnancy, childbirth, and needle sharing. Some of the most commonly known STIs are chlamydia, gonorrhea, herpes simplex virus (HSV1 and HSV2), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), human papilloma virus (HPV), syphilis, trichomoniasis, Hepatitis B, pubic lice (crabs), and scabies.

Types of Infection and Causes
STIs are caused by bacteria, viruses, or parasites that are spread sexually through blood, semen (including pre-ejaculate), vaginal fluid, and breastmilk, and sometimes through skin-to-skin contact, (herpes, HPV, scabies, syphilis). The most common STIs are classified as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BACTERIAL</th>
<th>VIRAL</th>
<th>PARASITIC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chlamydia</td>
<td>Herpes Simplex Virus</td>
<td>Trichomoniasis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gonorrhea</td>
<td>Hepatitis B</td>
<td>Pubic Lice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syphilis</td>
<td>HIV, HPV</td>
<td>Scabies</td>
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Signs and Symptoms
Many people with STIs do not experience signs/symptoms and are not aware of infection until complications occur (i.e. pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, pregnancy complications, cervical or rectal cancer, etc.). If symptoms do occur, they can look like the following:
- Sores/bumps in genital, oral or rectal area
- Unusual/odd-smelling discharge or bleeding
- Sore, swollen lymph nodes in the groin
- Pain or burning during urination or sex
- Rash over the trunk, hands or feet
- Abdominal pain

Prevention
Anyone who is sexually active has some risk of getting STIs. The most effective way to prevent STIs is to not engage in sexual or other intimate contact. Strategies to reduce the risk of STIs include:
- Get vaccinated for HPV and Hepatitis B
- Use barrier methods such as condoms, finger cots, or dental dams during sexual contact
- Wait until all partners are tested for STIs before engaging in sexual contact
- Know your sexual partners and communicate openly with them
- Limit your number of sexual partners
- Engage in mutual and consensual monogamy
- Avoid excessive alcohol or drugs, which may lead to riskier sexual behaviors
- Get tested regularly to know your status in order to protect yourself and others. NYU students in New York can call 212-443-1122 to get tested at the Student Health Center.

Treatment
Most bacterial STIs can be cured with antibiotics. However, there are antibiotic-resistant strains emerging, such as with gonorrhea. Viral STIs cannot be cured, but they can be managed. Parasitic STIs can be cured with the appropriate medicine prescribed by a doctor.

For more in-depth information, please visit these sources: The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists at www.acog.org, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov, Mayo Clinic www.mayoclinic.org, and Kinsey Institute at www.kinseyconfidential.org