

## **Lesson Twelve: STD Prevention**

### **Student Learning Objectives:**

The students will be able to...

1. Identify three reasons a person would want to avoid catching an STD.
2. List three ways that people can get STDs.
3. List three general symptoms of STDs and explain that STDs are often asymptomatic.
4. Describe three things a person should do if they suspect they might have an STD.
5. Describe three ways a person can eliminate or reduce their risk.

### **Agenda:**

1. Discuss the purpose of this lesson.
2. Lead activity using learning stations.
3. Show seven-minute video or lead an STD Basics discussion.
4. Debrief learning stations activity.
5. Help students understand the Local STD Testing Resource List Handout.

**1.** Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are infections that people can catch by having oral, anal, or vaginal sex or skin-to-skin contact with a person who has them. They're transmitted either through that person's blood, semen or vaginal fluids or – for some diseases – by skin-to-skin touching.

STDs such as HIV, chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, herpes, and human papillomavirus (HPV) have a major impact on public health here and around the world. About 19 million new cases of STDs occur in the U.S. each year and almost half of those are among teens and young adults ages (15-24)

Teens are one of the highest risk groups for STDs, partly because they tend to get into new sexual relationships more frequently (on average) than adults, but also because:

- Health care providers don't always discuss STDs with teens when they go for a general check-up; and teens don't always know how to bring it up.
- Teenage girls' cervixes are usually not fully mature and are, therefore, more vulnerable to infection than they will be in their twenties.
- Teenage guys, who have sex with other guys, especially if they don't think of themselves as gay or they aren't out, may be afraid to get check-ups for fear they'll be judged or discriminated against.
- Teens in general may get STD check-ups less often than they should for fear their parents will find out, or that they'll be judged. Teens often don't think they could have an STD, or they don't want to know if they have one. They may not know where to go, or they think they can't afford a check-up.

There are ways you can keep yourselves safe; we'll talk about them today. The point is to help you avoid being among the tens of millions of young people who will catch STDs over the next few years.

## **2. Learning Stations Activity**

This activity will help address STD facts, attitudes, and myths. I want to give you a chance to think about what you already know. Around the room you'll notice five learning stations. I'm giving each of you two blank Post-it

or sticky notes. I want you to write comments, facts, or even questions on your paper, and then post it on the learning station of your choice.

If you get to a sheet after others, try to think of things that other people haven't already written. You will have five minutes to complete this activity. Then we'll discuss what you wrote after we watch a short video.

### **3. Video: STD Myths**

#### **STD Basics...**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=zP3y6yTbcio&feature=player\\_embedded#](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zP3y6yTbcio&feature=player_embedded#)

**A.** The primary way people get infected is when they have oral, anal, or vaginal sex and the other person's semen or vaginal fluid comes in contact with their mucous membranes. Could someone list for us what parts of the body contain mucous membranes?

Let me make clear why mucous membranes are so vulnerable. Feel the inside of your cheek with the tip of your tongue. That's an example of a mucous membrane. Mucous membranes, in general, are thinner skin, tear easier than other skin on our bodies, and are soft and more porous than other skin, meaning there are tiny holes that allow small organisms to get through.

One way to think about it is to compare the skin on my hand and my arms to the windows in this room. Windows are good protection for the room. They block wind, rain and dirt from getting in. The skin on most of our bodies does the same thing. It's great protection from blocking things from getting in, like bacteria and viruses. But mucous membranes are more like a screen. Screens still protect the room from bigger things like birds, but rain, water, or dust can get through the screen. Likewise, mucous membranes can protect our bodies from bigger things, but bacteria and viruses can get in.

**B. So, to review ... which body fluids can pass STDs?**

Semen, vaginal fluid and blood. NOT sweat, tears, mucus (snot), urine, or saliva (spit). Though saliva sometimes has blood in it, it is not enough to transmit HIV, for example. Kissing is safe, in terms of STDs, but can spread colds or mononucleosis (mono).

### **C. Besides anal, vaginal, and oral sex, how else can people catch STDs?**

People can get some STDs through naked genital-to-genital contact or rubbing. You remember that the genitals are the outside parts of the reproductive system, right? That's the penis, scrotum on males, and the labia, clitoris, vaginal opening, and the area around them, called the vulva on females. Infections like chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis can only be passed via semen and vaginal fluids. But infections like herpes and Human Papillomavirus (HPV) can be spread through genital-to-genital contact even without actual anal, vaginal, or oral sex, because they're transmitted skin-to-skin rather than through body fluids.

**D.** What myths have you heard about STDs that you're pretty sure are NOT true?

Raise your hand if you've heard this one...

... Some people think that two condoms are better than one.

... Some people think people can catch STDs by drinking after someone or using their fork.

... Some people think you can't catch herpes unless the other person has sores you can see.

... Some people think only gay people can catch HIV.

... Some people think you can't get an STD if you use a condom.

... Some people think that once you get cured of something, you can't catch it again.

... Some people think the pill will protect them from STDs.

... Some people think you can get them from public toilets.

#### **4. Debrief learning stations activity**

### **1. Why would someone want to avoid getting an STD?**

- STDs range from being a nuisance to being life threatening. If not cured, some STDs can lead to chronic pain, damage to non-reproductive organs (heart, brain, etc.), infertility and miscarriage, premature births and birth defects, and death. Some of the more dangerous are HIV, Hepatitis A and B, certain strains of HPV, and for fetuses and newborns, genital herpes. Syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia can also have serious health impacts if untreated. (Some STDs are not this serious, for example pubic lice.)

- To avoid rejection by future partners. Some people would end a relationship if they found out their partner had ever had an STD. Talking about STD status can be a difficult conversation to have with someone.

### **2. People can get an STD by...**

- Having oral, anal, or vaginal sex or skin-to-skin contact with an infected person.

- Although HIV is an STD, people can catch it from sharing needles or by mother to child transmission through pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding.

- Hepatitis A is passed from infected feces to another person's mouth, so it could be spread by food workers if they have Hep A and don't wash their hands before handling food. This is rare.

- Pubic lice and scabies may be spread by sharing towels or clothing.

### **3. People might think they had an STD if ...**

- He / she has symptoms. Common early ones include: sores, unusual discharge, itching or tingling in genital and anal areas, burning especially with urination, lumps or bumps (can be raised, reddish or dimpled), rash, redness or swelling in the genital and anal areas.

- Sores can be a symptom whether they hurt or not. Syphilis sores are painless but herpes sores are often, though not always, painful. And sores count as something to be concerned about even if they go away. Both herpes and syphilis sores disappear but the infection is still in the person's body.

- Discharge is a symptom only if it is unusual or abnormal. In men, any liquid other than urine or semen coming from the penis is unusual. For a woman, there's normal, healthy vaginal discharge. That's how the vagina cleans itself. It's only unhealthy discharge if it's not her usual wetness. For example if it has a different odor than usual, if it's yellow or greenish instead of clear or white, if it is lumpy instead of smooth, or if there is blood when she is not menstruating. Any liquid besides feces coming from the anus is unusual.

- A partner tells the person. Remember that many STDs are asymptomatic, which means there are no symptoms that are seen or felt. The only way they might know to get tested is if a partner who did get symptoms cared enough to give them a call and let them know.

- A doctor tells the person. They might be smart enough to get tested regularly, even though they didn't have symptoms. So a health care provider might be the one to tell them. Sometimes a Public Health employee will call people to tell them their sex partner has an STD if that person who tested positive does not feel comfortable telling their partner(s).

#### **4. If people think they might have an STD, they should ...**

- Stop having sex or intimate contact with other people until it is cured. If it is one that isn't curable like HIV, then they should use condoms or dental dams correctly and consistently, even if their partner is also infected.
- Get to the clinic for testing and treatment.
- Talk to their partner(s) and encourage them to see a health care provider or go to a clinic. A partner means anyone with whom he or she has had oral, anal, or vaginal sex or genital-to-genital contact within the last six months.

#### **5. People can reduce their risk of giving or getting an STD by ...**

- Abstaining from oral, anal, and vaginal sex.
- Maintaining long-term mutual monogamy (as in marriage or long-term partner relationship).
- Using condoms. They are very effective against STDs when used correctly and consistently.
- Getting vaccinated for Hepatitis A and B and HPV. The CDC recommends that everyone aged 0-18 should get vaccinated against Hepatitis B. They also recommend that girls should get the HPV vaccine at age 11 or 12, but it is safe and available to anyone, male or female, age nine to 26.
- Reducing the number of sexual partners in their lifetime.
- Reducing the frequency of sex.
- Avoiding the exchange of semen and vaginal fluid. In other words, massage and hugging are safer than vaginal, oral and / or anal sex.

- Getting yearly, thorough STD check-ups even if no symptoms are present. Some people may need more frequent check-ups depending upon how many partners they have or how many their partner(s) have. It is best to talk to a health care provider for recommendations on frequency of testing and which tests are needed.

- Not having sex with people they know have an STD or whose STD status they don't know.

**5. Local STD Testing Resource List Handout (to be sent via firstclass)**