

Lesson Fifteen: STDs - Risks & Vulnerability

Student Learning Objectives:

The Students will be able to...

1. Compare the relative risk of different sexual behaviors, including abstaining.
2. Compare the relative risk of varying numbers of partners, sequential and concurrent.

Agenda:

1. Introduce lesson with STD risk story.
2. Lead STD transmission activity using fluid exchange or 3x5 card method.
3. Explain why teens are at greater risk for STDs.
4. Explain concurrent partners using STD Risk and Vulnerability Visuals 1-3.
5. Lead risky behavior activity using Risk Behavior Cards.
6. Conclude lesson.

1. Introduce lesson with STD risk story.

Ramón went to a local clinic for an STD check up. He said his new girlfriend wanted him to get tested for everything before they started having sex. He told the doctor at the clinic this was his second relationship, and he'd had oral and vaginal sex with his first girlfriend. He figured his chances of having an STD were pretty low because he had only had sex with one person in his life. The doctor told Ramón to pee in a cup in the bathroom for the test, and the lab results came back positive for gonorrhea. The doctor asked if Ramón would tell his

ex-girlfriend about the results, but Ramón was too mad to talk to his ex-girlfriend about this. The doctor said Public Health can contact her, instead, and tell her she should get tested. When she got the phone call, she asked the Public Health staff person how they got her name. He said he couldn't tell her; he explained that he had to protect that person's privacy, just like he would protect hers. In the end she gave him contact information for four people she had had sex with, so that he could contact them, too. Ramón didn't know that his ex-girlfriend had ever had sex with anyone else.

The fact of the matter is that the age group with the most STDs is teenagers. The Centers for Disease Control says:

- Each year, there are approximately 19 million new STD infections, and almost half of them are among youth aged 15 to 24.
- In one recent year, an estimated 5,259 young people aged 13-24 in the 33 states reporting to CDC were diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, representing about 14% of the persons diagnosed that year.

Anyone having unprotected sex can get STDs, and anyone can spread them. The point of this lesson is that many times, people think that STDs only happen to "other people". But if one in four teenage women had an STD in a national study done in 2008, then there is a 25% chance that "other person" could be you, your boyfriend or girlfriend, your brother or sister, or your teammate or friend. I hope you can learn from other peoples' mistakes and not have to make your own. Just remember, sometimes people get an STD from sexual assault or rape and they did not make a mistake. What happened is not their fault.

When people start new relationships, trust has to be earned over time. If people are going to have sex with someone, they should know the person's sexual history, if they have one, and whether or not they used condoms with their previous partner(s). It is also important to ask their partner's disease status (whether they have any diseases), because some STDs like HPV, HIV, and genital herpes

have no cure. Remember, it is illegal to not tell sex partners that you have HIV if you know you have it.

2. Lead STD transmission activity.

When I say "go" please walk around the room and shake hands with three different people. Make sure you write down their name on the lined side of your index card.

Some of you had a letter on the blank side of your card...

S = STD

A = ABSTINENCE

M = MONOGAMY

C = CONDOM

U = UNPROTECTED

Follow up questions:

Could you tell – just by looking – who was infected?

Who did not shake hands with anyone during the exercise? How did it feel to not participate?

Who only shook hands with one other person?

Who had the "C" on their card?

How did it feel to be "tested"? Were you uncomfortable knowing that others could see the results of your test? Would a promise of confidentiality be important in deciding whether or not to be tested for HIV or other STDs?

Only one card was originally infected, but through exchanges with multiple cards, the infection was transmitted to those not even in contact with the original source. What would have happened if they shook hands with only one other person? How about if it were with five other people?

3. Explain why teens are at greater risk of STDs.

- About 1 in 7 high school students has had four or more sex partners during their life. In a high school of 1,000 kids, that's about 140 people who've had four or more partners. The more partners a person has in his or her life, the greater the risk of contracting an STD. (Of course, that means that 6 in 7 have had fewer partners or none.)
- About 1 in 3 sexually active high school students did not use a condom during last sexual intercourse. Condoms help lower the risk of STDs. (Of course, that means 2 in 3 DID use a condom.)
- A little more than half of people aged 15-19 has had oral sex with someone of another sex. (Of course, that means that almost half have not.) But the point is not everyone realizes that STD germs can spread from mouth to genitals or vice versa.
- People are more likely to engage in high-risk behaviors, such as unprotected sex, when they're under the influence of drugs or alcohol. About 1 out of 5 high school students who've had sexual intercourse during the past three months drank alcohol or used drugs before their last sexual intercourse.
- Teens are less likely to be married or in a long-term monogamous relationship than adults and are more likely to have a concurrent sexual relationship. A concurrent sexual relationship is when a person is having sex with more than one person at the same time. Concurrent sexual partnerships are risky because they make it easier to spread HIV and other STDs.

- Teen girls' cervixes are not fully developed and the cells are especially susceptible to STDs.
- The frequency of sex can increase a person's chances of getting an STD. When people have more sex, they are at greater risk for getting a sexually transmitted infection. Also, the more sex their partner has (or has had in the past) or the more partners they've had can increase a new partner's risk of infection.

4. Explain concurrent partners using STD Risk and Vulnerability

Concurrent partners are when a person is having sex with more than one person in the same period of time. It is risky behavior because it opens people up to sexual "networks" where STDs can spread more quickly than if people are abstinent or with a monogamous partner.

In the following visuals white figures represent people with STDs. The lines connecting figures indicate that those two people have had sex.

How STDs Spread - Abstinence or 1 Monogamous Partner.

The white stick figure represents someone who has an STD. The single dark stick figures represent people being abstinent. The figures with only one line between them represent monogamous partners – where each person only has sex with the other partner and no one else. These stick figures can represent people of all genders.

How STDs Spread - 1 or 2 Concurrent Partners. Once people start having sex with multiple partners at the same time, called concurrent partners, their risk of getting an STD increases. The white figures have STDs.

How STDs Spread - 2 or 3 Concurrent Partners. Increasing the number of concurrent partners makes you more susceptible to STDs if someone in the network has one.

5. Lead risky behavior activity:

We just talked about how and why teens are at greater risk for STDs than other age groups of people. In this activity, we will look at which behaviors are riskier than others in terms of getting an STD or HIV.

There are four signs on one wall of the classroom. Each sign means the opportunity of acquiring an STD or HIV due to a certain risk behavior.

Please silently read your card and stand near the sign you feel represents the risk of acquiring an STD or HIV for the behavior listed on your card. Next, talk to your neighbors near the sign and arrange yourselves so your behavior is either more or less risky than the person next in line. You should be in descending order from most risky on one side to least risky on the other.

A Bigger Risk

- Sharing needles to inject drugs: Blood transmission is the easiest way to spread HIV and Hepatitis B and C.
- Breastfeeding from a mother with HIV: A mother can use HIV medication to lower her viral load and formula to feed her baby.
- Having vaginal or anal sex without a condom: Anal sex is riskier than vaginal sex and in both cases, the receptive partner is at more risk than the insertive partner.
- Receiving a blood transfusion before 1985 in the U.S.: This is when the US started routinely testing blood for HIV. Blood transfusions are still risky in parts of the world where donors and donated blood are not as carefully screened, due to the cost of screening.

A Risk

- Dating someone who is a lot older: Older partners are more likely to try to convince younger partners that they should not use

condoms, and it could be harder to assert yourself with someone older whose opinion might seem more valid than your own or whose respect for you might be low.

- Drinking beer or doing drugs at a party: Alcohol and drugs alter judgment and have been shown to decrease condom use.
- Having oral sex without a condom or dental dam: The risk of oral sex is less than unprotected vaginal or anal sex. The risk depends on the disease, but in most cases, the receptive partner is at greater risk of acquiring an STD than the insertive partner. If a person already has an STD, it's easier for him or her to get HIV from an infected partner. Chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, herpes, HPV, and HIV can all be transmitted during unprotected oral sex. HPV and herpes may not be stopped by using a condom or dental dam because they are spread by skin-to-skin contact. Oral-anal contact is definitely a risk for Hepatitis B with an infected partner.
- Spending time with a boyfriend or girlfriend at home when no adults are there: "Two-thirds (68%) of 16 to 18-year olds who reported a first sexual experience in [one study] said that they first had sexual intercourse in their family home, their partner's family home, or a friend's house."
- Using a razor or a piercing or tattooing needle someone else already used: Because razors can have blood on them, they should not be shared, since both Hepatitis and HIV are blood borne. "A risk of HIV transmission does exist if instruments contaminated with blood are either not sterilized or disinfected or are used inappropriately between clients. CDC recommends that single-use instruments intended to penetrate the skin be used once, then disposed of. Reusable instruments or devices that penetrate the skin and/or contact a client's blood should be thoroughly cleaned and sterilized between clients.

A Smaller Risk

- Having vaginal or anal sex with a condom: “Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, are highly effective in preventing the sexual transmission of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. In addition, consistent and correct use of latex condoms reduces the risk of other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including diseases transmitted by genital secretions, and to a lesser degree, genital ulcer diseases. Condom use may reduce the risk for genital human papillomavirus (HPV) infection and HPV-associated diseases, e.g., genital warts and cervical cancer.”
- Having sex with a monogamous partner: Both people must test negative for STDs first and then trust each other that neither has had sex with anyone else in the months before they were tested and that neither is having sex with other people outside the relationship. This is placed in a risk category, because sometimes people lie about their histories, their test results, or sex with other people outside the relationship. How much risk that entails is a judgment call ... it would be OK to call it “a risk” rather than “a smaller risk.”
- Giving first aid and CPR: Current CPR recommendations stress the chest compressions over to mouth to mouth resuscitation, but barriers are available to prevent mouth to mouth contact if the victim is bleeding. When providing first aid wound care, universal precautions should be followed by wearing latex gloves.

No Risk

- Abstaining from sex and drugs: The only 100% sure way to avoid STDs.
- Being with someone who is crying, coughing, or sneezing: These can spread coughs and colds, not STDs.
- Donating blood: There is no risk whatsoever.
- Receiving a blood transfusion after 1985 in the U.S.: All blood is tested thoroughly in the US and most other nations.

- Kissing (closed mouth): There is no risk from this kind of kissing.
- Getting a mosquito bite: Mosquitoes transmit many diseases but not HIV or other STDs.
- Touching doorknobs, toilet seats, dishes, glasses: STDs and HIV do not survive for long on surfaces. "CDC studies have shown that drying of ... high concentrations of HIV [in blood] reduces the amount of infectious virus by 90 to 99 percent within several hours. Since the HIV concentrations used in laboratory studies are much higher than those actually found in blood or other specimens, drying of HIV-infected human blood or other body fluids reduces the theoretical risk of environmental transmission to that which has been observed—essentially zero."
- Going to school with a person who has an STD or HIV: Casual contact like what people have in a classroom, on a basketball court, or in the lunchroom will not spread STDs or HIV.
- Being in water with people who have HIV such as pools, hot tubs or showers: Plantars warts (a kind of HPV) and athlete's foot do transmit from locker room floors and shared shower floors, so wearing sandals is recommended. But there are no known STD infections spread by these environments.

6. Conclude the lesson by summarizing critical points.

Wrap up the lesson by restating these key points:

- Anyone who has unprotected sex is at risk of contracting an STD or HIV.
- Not having sex is the only 100% sure way not to get an STD or HIV.
- STDs do not get passed by casual contact. But when people get too casual about protecting themselves, like drinking or using drugs, not

using condoms, or having sex with concurrent partners, then STDs can spread.