

Sexually Transmitted Infections

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infections caused by bacteria, viruses, or parasites that can be spread through sexual activity including anal, vaginal, and oral sex. Some STIs are also transmitted through blood-to-blood contact such as needle sharing. Pregnant women with STIs risk passing their infection to their baby during pregnancy or childbirth.

Most Common STIs in Minnesota:

- **Chlamydia** is the number one reported infectious disease in MN.
- **Gonorrhea** is the second most reported STI in MN.

What are the risks associated with STIs:

Chlamydia is said to be the most widespread sexually transmitted disease today. According to the Minnesota Department of Health website, “It is especially dangerous for women because it often leads to pelvic inflammatory disease, a major cause of infertility. Untreated chlamydia can cause infertility by blocking the fallopian tubes with scar tissue. The danger of tubal pregnancies is also greater. Chlamydia, if untreated, can also cause infertility problems in men.”

“Gonorrhea is a bacterial infection which can affect the sexual organs, throat, rectum and other parts of the body including the eyes and joints. Arthritis and swelling of the joints sometimes result. In 40% of men and nearly 80% of women who are infected with gonorrhea, there are no obvious symptoms.” says the Minnesota Department of Health website.

Ways to help prevent STIs:

- Abstinence
- Reduced number of sexual partners
- Practice mutual monogamy
- Use condoms

Several STIs have little to no symptoms to alert you to the fact that you are infected. If you suspect you may have an STI, **get tested!**

To learn more about STIs call Todd County Health and Human Services at 320-732-4500. Todd County Health and Human Services also coordinates with Mahube-Otwa Community Action Partnership 1-877-275-6123 and holds a monthly reproductive health clinic to provide affordable and accessible family planning and reproductive health services in Cass, Todd and Wadena counties. For more information or for an appointment in Todd County, call 1-320-732-4500.

Sources: Minnesota Department of Health, World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control