

How Did I Get This STD?

Most people don't realize that, like most infectious diseases, STDs take time to develop. The time from the moment of exposure to a bacterium, virus or parasite until signs and symptoms of the disease appear is called the incubation period. Many STDs can stay inactive in your system for days, weeks, months or years. So, before you consider accusing your partner of infidelity, consider the following:

- **Bacterial Vaginosis** - The incubation period is anywhere from 12 hours to 5 days.
- **Chancroid** - The incubation period is anywhere from 3 - 5 days, though it can extend up to 2 weeks.
- **Chlamydia** - Generally if there are symptoms they will start to show in 1 to 3 weeks. Up to two-thirds of all women and one half of all men have no symptoms; others have symptoms so mild that they go unnoticed. If you're diagnosed, it is important to notify your partner(s). Chlamydia can be transmitted at delivery from mother to child.
- **Genital Warts (HPV)** - Only certain strains even show symptoms and when they do it could be a month to many years.
- **Gonorrhea** - The incubation period is 1 to 14 days. Half of all women and approximately 10% of all men have no symptoms, so if you're diagnosed, it is important that you notify your partner(s). A pregnant woman can transmit the disease to her unborn child at the time of delivery. To prevent blindness, a newborn's eyes are treated with silver nitrate or antibiotics at the time of birth.
- **Hepatitis***
- **Herpes** - The incubation period is 5 to 20 days. Herpes can stay dormant for years but can show symptoms around three months after infection. If a pregnant woman has an active case at the time of delivery, a Cesarean section will be performed to prevent infection and possibly death to her unborn child.
- **HIV/AIDS** - It can take as little as 90 days to years to develop.
- **Pubic Lice** - As long as a week if it's the first time you've had pubic lice; as little as a day if this is a recurrence. Symptoms can't really be missed and will generally show within a couple of days to a couple of weeks.
- **Scabies** - Scabies is a parasite and is hard to miss. It can take as long as a week if it's the first time you've been infected; a day if it's a recurrence.
- **Syphilis** - The incubation period is 1 to 3 months. Syphilis goes through three different stages which can be hard to identify. A pregnant woman can transmit it to her unborn child during pregnancy and delivery.

- **Trichomoniasis** - If symptoms appear, it takes 3 to 28 days to develop.

***Here are descriptions of the most common forms of hepatitis -- A through D -- in the U.S. All cause inflammation of the liver.**

- **Type A Hepatitis** - Is contracted through anal-oral contact, by coming in contact with the feces of someone with hepatitis A, or by eating or drinking hepatitis A-contaminated food or water. The incubation period is 14 to 45 days.
- **Type B Hepatitis** - Can be contracted from infected blood, seminal fluid, vaginal secretions, or contaminated drug needles, including tattoo or body-piercing equipment. It can also be spread from a mother to her newborn. The incubation period is 60-150 days, with 90 days as the average.
- **Type C Hepatitis** - Is not easily spread through sex. You're more likely to get it through contact with infected blood, contaminated razors, needles, tattoo and body-piercing equipment, or manicure or pedicure tools that haven't been properly sanitized, and a mother can pass it to her baby during delivery. Most people do not have early symptoms of hepatitis C. In fact, most people (about 80%) who are infected with the hepatitis C virus (HCV) have no symptoms -- even after many years. You can look and feel perfectly healthy, yet still be infected with the disease and infect others.
- **Type D Hepatitis** - A person who is infected with the hepatitis D virus must also have a hepatitis B infection in order for the hepatitis D virus to multiply. For people who are infected with the hepatitis B virus at the same time as the hepatitis D virus, symptoms of hepatitis D can begin 4 weeks to 12 weeks (on average) after infection with the hepatitis D virus. The virus can be passed through contact with infected blood, contaminated needles, or by sexual contact with a hepatitis B-infected person.

Other Informational Links:

American Social Health Association

<http://www.ashastd.org/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/STD/>

E-Cards, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www2c.cdc.gov/ecards/index.asp?category=174>

Get Yourself Tested

<http://www.gytnow.org/>

National Institute of Health Medline

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/sexuallytransmitteddiseases.html>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

<http://www.womenshealth.gov/faq/sexually-transmitted-infections.cfm>

World Health Organization

http://www.who.int/topics/sexually_transmitted_infections/en/