

If You Are Diagnosed with an STD

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in the U.S. alone there are approximately 19 million new STD cases each year, about half of which occur among youth ages 15-24 years old. The good news is that all sexually transmitted diseases can be treated or cured. Some are bacterial infections (Chlamydia, gonorrhea, bacterial vaginosis, and syphilis) which can be cured with antibiotics. Others are viral infections (herpes, HIV, HPV) which can't be cured, but they can be treated to relieve symptoms. If you are diagnosed with an STD, here are some suggestions:

- Make peace with yourself. Don't feel guilty, dirty, or that you're a bad person for having an STD. Remember, you are taking responsibility for your sexual health by getting diagnosed and treated. You are protecting yourself and others by doing this.
- Follow the treatment advice of your provider. Repeat to your provider how you should treat/cure the infection. This helps you better understand what you will need to do.
- Ask your provider how you can prevent infecting your sexual partner and follow her/his advice.
- Tell your partner that you are being treated for an STD and that s/he should also be tested. You can begin the conversation by saying, "I have something important to discuss with you."
- Present the facts of the infection and what your partner will need to do. Give your partner as much information as possible.
- Understand that your partner may be upset. Give them time to adjust to the news. If s/he breaks up with you over this, then your relationship wasn't as strong as you believed. On the other hand, working through this can make your relationship stronger. Always remember that you are being responsible by informing her/him.
- Avoid sex until both you and your partner have successfully completed treatment.
- If your provider recommends a follow-up visit, make the appointment and participate in the subsequent care.

However embarrassing, it is absolutely imperative that you inform your current and recent partners. Anonymous notification via e-card is better than not informing partners of STD status:

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

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/