

sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

wildfact

Campus Health offers confidential testing for STDs. You can bill all medical testing to your Bursar's account. Your Bursar's statement protects your privacy and will read: "Student Health Charge".

Q How do you know if you have an STD?

A. Sometimes you do and sometimes you don't.

Signs or symptoms that may indicate a problem include:

pain, itching, painful sores, redness, unusual discharge, rash, painless lesions, unusual/foul odor, bumps, painful urination, swelling, unusual bleeding, blisters, sore throat

If you notice any changes in your body, get checked out by a medical professional who

can give you a thorough exam and order appropriate lab tests.

On the other hand, many STDs have no symptoms at all. Most women with chlamydia (and about half of men) do not experience any noticeable symptoms. Gonorrhea, herpes, HIV, and human papilloma virus (HPV) may show a wide range of symptoms (from mild to moderate to severe). The only way to find out for sure if you have an STD is to get tested.

Q What's the difference between STDs and STIs?

A. As times change, so do names. Since around the 1980's, diseases spread through sexual contact have commonly been referred to as "sexually transmitted diseases"—STDs for short. Going back further, college students of your grandparents' age called sexual infections "venereal diseases" or VD. In recent years, however, many public health experts have suggested replacing STD with a newer term—sexually transmitted infection, or STI.

Why? The concept of "disease," as in STD, implies a clear medical problem, usually some obvious signs or symptoms. But in truth

several of the most common STDs have no signs or symptoms in the majority of persons infected. Or they have mild signs and symptoms that can be easily overlooked. The sexually transmitted virus or bacteria can be described as creating "infection," which may or may not result in "disease." This is true of chlamydia, gonorrhea, herpes, and human papillomavirus (HPV), to name a few.

For this reason, in some of the published literature, the term "disease" is being replaced by "infection" (The American Social Health Association, 2011).



Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

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