

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS: MESSAGES

LAST UPDATE: MARCH 2022

About the Message Library

People affected by disaster must have access to timely, appropriate and accurate information to help them keep themselves and their families safe and well. They should know their rights, entitlements and be able to give feedback. Responders have a duty to put in place appropriate, systematic and coordinated mechanisms to ensure this.

Our Message Library offers clear, concise and simple messages on a range of topics as templates for you to adapt and use in the context you are working in. These are intended to help you make a quick start on communicating with communities while you further develop mechanisms for on-going dialogue with diverse groups within each community.

For help contextualising and using the messages we recommend you do our e-learning course and read the following technical guidance.

E-learning

<https://kayaconnect.org/course/info.php?id=768>

Guidance

<https://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-guidance/cdac-message-library-user-guidance>

What are STIs?

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are spread predominantly by unprotected sexual contact. Some STIs can also be transmitted during pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding and through infected blood or blood products.

STIs have a profound impact on health. If untreated, they can lead to serious consequences including neurological and cardiovascular disease, infertility, ectopic pregnancy, stillbirths, and increased risk of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). They are also associated with stigma, domestic violence, and affects quality of life.

The majority of STIs have no symptoms. When they are present common symptoms of STIs are vaginal or urethral discharge, genital ulcer and lower abdominal pain.

The most common and curable STIs are trichomonas, chlamydia, gonorrhoea and syphilis.

Risks of unprotected sex

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) are extremely contagious. They can be caught through having unprotected sex - that is sex without using a condom. They can be painful and lead to sickness, infertility and complications during pregnancy if left untreated.

Signs and Symptoms of STIs for women

If you have unusual vaginal discharge or there is a change in colour or smell of your vaginal discharge, if you have ulcers on your genitals, pain when urinating or lower abdominal pain, you may have a sexually transmitted infection. Seek medical help immediately from [insert info] as you may need medical treatment.

Signs and Symptoms of STIs for men

If you have unusual discharge from your penis, ulcers on your genitals, pain when urinating, swellings in the groin or scrotum, you may have a sexually transmitted infection and may need immediate treatment. Seek medical help immediately from [insert info].

How to prevent infection

To prevent sexually transmitted infections, use a condom consistently and correctly when having any type of sex (oral, vaginal or anal sex, or genital-to-genital contact). Another way of avoiding infections is to abstain from sexual intercourse (oral, vaginal or anal sex, or genital-to-genital contact).

Importance of wearing condoms

Condoms are often the easiest and most effective way of preventing sexually transmitted infections. Use a condom correctly and consistently every time you have sex. When you buy condoms, ensure they are not stored in a very hot place or in direct sunlight. Make sure there are no staples or holes through the packet. Check that it is not passed the expiry date on the packet. There are two types of condoms: male condoms and female condoms. Male condoms are rolled over the penis before any type of sexual intercourse when the penis is erect. Female condoms are inserted into the vagina before sex starts. If you need further advice on how to use a condom contact [insert info].

Location of facilities providing free condoms

You can get free condoms at [insert info]. Opening times are from [insert time] to [insert time].

What help is available if you are worried you have a STI?

If you have unprotected sex or are worried about having a sexually transmitted infection, contact [insert info]. You will get advice on treatment, how to prevent infection and how to manage any infections you may have. All information you provide to your health-worker is confidential. Opening hours are from [insert time] to [insert time].

REFERENCES

For more information on this topic, we recommend you read the following references.

World Health Organization (2022). **Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)**
https://www.who.int/health-topics/sexually-transmitted-infections#tab=tab_1

World Health Organization Factsheets:

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

[https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/sexually-transmitted-infections-\(stis\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/sexually-transmitted-infections-(stis))

Cervical cancer

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cervical-cancer>

Multi-drug resistant gonorrhoea

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/multi-drug-resistant-gonorrhoea>

HIV/AIDS

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/hiv-aids>

Hepatitis B

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/hepatitis-b>

Herpes simplex virus

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/herpes-simplex-virus>

Antibiotic resistance

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/antibiotic-resistance>

Infertility

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/infertility>

Human T-lymphotropic virus type 1

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/human-t-lymphotropic-virus-type-1>

HELP US KEEP THE LIBRARY UP TO DATE

If you would like to contribute to topic reviews, have found a message that needs greater clarity, or wish to create a new topic, please contact us at info@cdacnetwork.org.