

General Information

talk
to me

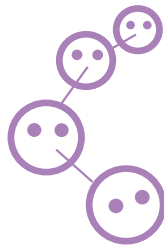
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General information

STIs



STIs (sexually transmitted infections) are infections that are passed from one person to another through intimate, sexual contact. STIs consist of a range of infections, including viral and bacterial infections. Some have symptoms and some may not. However, early diagnosis of STIs is vital to prevent potential long-term medical complications including infertility and ectopic pregnancy.

The number of reported STIs has doubled in Ireland in the last five years, so it is important that you and your children have knowledge and information on this topic.

All STIs are treatable, but not all are curable and some, including HIV, can be fatal. The sooner a STI is diagnosed and treated, the better to avoid long-term health complications.

Symptoms of STIs can include:

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- Unusual vaginal discharge or bleeding between menstrual periods
- Unusual discharge from the penis
- Pain, especially when urinating
- Itching, bumps, rash or sores in the genital area

Or there may be no symptoms at all.



- **Genital warts:** This is the most common STI in Ireland today. The infection is caused by a virus. The warts can be treated by special prescribed creams or by cryotherapy (freezing). Genital warts are highly contagious and can be treated but not cured, so they may return repeatedly.
- **Chlamydia:** This is a bacterial infection that is treated by a course of antibiotics. Most people infected with chlamydia have no symptoms, but can be diagnosed by a swab or urine test. If left untreated, it can cause pelvic inflammatory disease and infertility in men and women.
- **HIV:** HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus and is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). There is currently no vaccine to prevent HIV infection. The sole way to prevent HIV infection is to avoid activities that put a person at risk of infection, such as sharing injection needles or having sex with an infected person.
- **Other STIs include:** Genital herpes, Gonorrhoea, Hepatitis B and Syphilis.



Treatment in a Sexually Transmitted Infection or Genito Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinic is confidential, free and non-judgemental.

Any medication or treatment is also provided free of charge. For a clinic near you call the Drugs/HIV Helpline on: **1800 459 459.**

Condoms, when used correctly and consistently, offer the best protection from most STIs, including HIV. However, no method of contraception can provide 100% protection from STIs or pregnancy.

Age of consent

In Ireland anyone of either sex who is under the age of seventeen is not deemed old enough to give consent to sexual intercourse.

Helpful websites

www.crisispregnancy.ie

Crisis Pregnancy Agency
A source of information, research and links.

www.positiveoptions.ie

Positive Options is a directory of agencies skilled in the area of crisis pregnancy.

www.thinkcontraception.ie

A source of information for men and women living in Ireland who want to learn more about their sexual and reproductive health, especially contraception.

www.cluedup.ie

www.nehb.ie/youthhealthne

Websites for young people primarily aged between 16-24 developed by regional Health Boards and aimed at providing information and support on all aspects of sexual health.



If you would like to order the DVD that accompanies this booklet please call or email:

Crisis Pregnancy Agency
(01) 8146292
info@crisispregnancy.ie



Agencies & supports

PARENTLINE

Carmichael House,
North Brunswick St., Dublin 7

i **Lo-Call: 1850 927 277**
www.parentline.ie

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Head Office, Marlborough St.,
Dublin 1

i **Call: 01 889 6400**
www.education.ie

DRUGS/HIV HELPLINE

A free, confidential helpline on
issues relating to sexual health,
drug misuse and HIV

i **Freephone: 1800 459 459**

CHILDLINE IRELAND

c/o ISPCC, 20 Molesworth St., Dublin 2

i **Freephone**
Helpline: 1800 666 666
www.ispcc.ie

PARENTS' SUPPORT

For information and support
if your child is gay or lesbian.

i **Call: 01 872 1055**
www.gayswitchboard.ie

BELONG TO

Support for lesbian and gay young
people

i **Call: 01 8773 4184**
www.belongto.org

NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF IRELAND

3 Montague St., Dublin 2

i **Call: 01 478 4122**
www.youth.ie

NATIONAL PARENTS COUNCIL (PRIMARY)

12 Marlborough Court, Dublin 1

i **Helpline: 01 887 4477**
01 887 4034
www.npc.ie

NATIONAL PARENTS COUNCIL (POST PRIMARY)

Unit 5, Glasnevin Business Centre,
Ballyboggan Road, Dublin 11

i **Call: 01 830 2740/ 830 2747**
www.npcpp.ie

CARI

For children, families & groups
affected by sexual abuse
110 Lower Drumcondra Rd., Dublin 9

i **Lo Call Helpline:**
1890 924 567

HEALTH PROMOTION UNIT

Department of Health & Children,
Hawkins Hse., Hawkins St., Dublin 2

i **Call: 01 635 4000**
www.healthpromotion.ie