

The public is often unaware of the magnitude and health consequences of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). Because many STDs show no apparent symptoms and can go undetected there can be major health consequences, such as infertility, certain cancers and other chronic diseases that occur years after the initial infection. There is often a stigma associated with having an STD which keeps public discussion and education to a minimum. In 2006, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) reported 19 million new STD infections in the US. Over half of those new cases of STDs were among people ages 15-24 years of age.

No one who is sexually active is immune to STDs. Everyone who is sexually active can get or transmit an STD. A person does not need to feel guilty, ashamed or embarrassed because they think they might have an STD. Such feelings must not prevent a person from getting treatment. STDs will not go away by themselves and in many cases relatively quick, painless treatments are available.

### Why are STDs a problem?

- Half of all people in the US under age 40 are likely to get an STD if current rates of infection continue. One in four sexually active teens has had an STD.
- People can have more than one STD at a time. Untreated STDs, those with symptoms and those without, make it easier to get other STDs, including HIV.
- The most common STDs are Chlamydia, gonorrhea, genital warts and genital herpes. In teens, the most common are Chlamydia, gonorrhea, genital warts and pelvic inflammatory disease (PID).
- It is common for STDs to be passed from one person to another unintentionally by people who have no symptoms. Most people do not know they are infected.
- Untreated STDs can cause serious harm including but not limited to, sterility, pain, still birth, and cervical cancer. Some STDs have immediate health consequences; others have serious long term health effects.

### Preventing STDs

- Form a mutually monogamous relationship with your partner. Avoid sexual contact until you are reasonably sure-through testing and examination- that you and your partner are free of STDs as much as possible. Remember, you can't tell by looking at someone if they have an STD.
- Include STD testing as part of your regular medical check-up. Do not assume your health care practitioner will check you for STDs-speak up and ask.
- If you become sexually active, use condoms made of latex or polyurethane (not natural lambskin). Condoms do not provide 100% protection, but short of abstinence, they provide the best protection available. Be sure to use condoms every time you engage in sexual intercourse, and use them correctly. Condoms do not protect as effectively against intimate contact with a partner who has herpes or warts outside the area of coverage.

### Treatment

- If you think you might have been exposed to an STD, get checked right away.
- Most STDs can be treated. Bacterial STDs are treated with antibiotics; antiviral medications and other treatments are available for herpes, genital warts, and HIV.

Follow instructions, avoid sexual contact till treatment is complete, and notify persons who may have been exposed so they can seek treatment also.

## Reported Cases of Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Kitsap County

<i>By Disease</i>	<i>2006</i>
AIDS (new cases)	6
HIV (new cases)	8
Chlamydia Infections	683
Gonorrhea	72
Herpes, genital – initial	68
Early Syphilis	5
Congenital and Late/Latent Syphilis	0

### **Resources:**

#### ***Local Information: Kitsap County Health District***

Health Promotion Department (360) 337-5235  
Family Planning Clinic (360) 337-5235

#### ***National Information Hotlines***

National STD Hotline 1-800-227-8922  
National AIDS Hotline 1-800-342-2437

#### ***Information on-line***

Center for Disease Control [www.cdc.gov/std](http://www.cdc.gov/std)  
Washington State Department of Health [www.wa.gov/cfh/std](http://www.wa.gov/cfh/std)