

April Updates



HOHENFELS HEALTH CLINIC

As of 1 April 2010

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Most Diagnosed STDs Today:

- Chlamydia
- Gonorrhea
- Genital Herpes
- Syphilis
- Human Papillomavirus
- Trichomoniasis
- HIV/AIDS
- Hepatitis B&C

How you can prevent the spread of STDs:

- Use safe sex practices!! Condoms are available at the clinic.
- Check your vaccination status with your local immunization nurse . Make an appointment today to receive the HPV and Hepatitis B vaccines.
- If you suspect you may have an STD, make an appointment right away for testing and treatment. The sooner you are treated, the less time there is for complications to arise.
- If you are a female and are sexually active, make sure you are being seen annually for a well-woman exam.
- If you have new or multiple sex partners, make sure you are routinely being seen for STD testing.



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STDs: Zero symptoms doesn't equal a clean bill of health

April is Sexually Transmitted Disease Education and Awareness Month

By Lindsay Truax and Aviance Betts, Illesheim Health Clinic

Did you know that one in five Americans has a sexually transmitted disease?

Sexually transmitted diseases are a major community health issue in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it is estimated there are 19 million new STD infections each year. Two-thirds of the new cases are among young people aged 15 to 24 years old.

The most commonly diagnosed sexually transmitted diseases in the world today include: chlamydia, human papilloma virus, gonorrhea, trichomoniasis, genital herpes, HIV/AIDS, syphilis and hepatitis B and C.

The most frequently reported of these are chlamydia and gonorrhea. In 2008, more than one million cases of chlamydia and approximately 300,000 cases of gonorrhea were reported to the CDC. Both of these are more prevalent among women versus men, along with being more recurrent in 15 to 19-year-olds.

Often people assume someone does not have a sexually transmitted disease because they "look clean." This is a common misconception because many times people that are infected with an STD do not experience any symptoms. Between 50-75 percent of those infected with chlamydia experience no symptoms at all. This is why it is referred to as the "silent" disease. Furthermore, many STDs are able to spread from person to person before symptoms appear.

The majority of sexually transmitted diseases cannot be prevented through vaccination. Currently the only STDs that can be prevented through vaccination are hepatitis B and HPV. Undiagnosed and untreated sexually transmitted diseases can lead to short-term and long-term health concerns. Sexually transmitted diseases can cause complications such as epididymitis in men and pelvic inflammatory disease in women, both of which can lead to infertility. An estimated 24,000 women become infertile each year because of STD infections. Women who are considering pregnancy or are currently pregnant should be tested for an STD because of the harmful impact they can have on a developing baby. This includes possible miscarriage, stillbirth and birth defects to the developing baby. Furthermore, sexually active individuals with an STD are more susceptible to contracting HIV, or human immunodeficiency virus.

The CDC recommends that females under the age of 25 be routinely tested for sexually transmitted diseases once a year, along with those older than 25 who have risk factors such as new or multiple sex partners. Condoms – if used correctly and consistently – can protect against many sexually transmitted diseases. Condoms provide a resistant barrier to particles the size of STD pathogens. However, condoms only provide protection against the areas they cover. If open sores are not covered when the condom is in place, no protection is being provided.

If you have further questions or concerns, please make an appointment at your local health clinic or at Tricare online at www.tricareonline.com. You can also contact your community health nurse for more information. If you have questions regarding your hepatitis B or HPV vaccination status, contact your local immunization nurse.

For more, visit the CDC Web site at www.cdc.gov.

