



Your Vaginal Health: Sexually Transmitted Infections

What are sexually transmitted infections?

Sexually transmitted infections (also known as sexually transmitted diseases) are infections that are passed between people engaging in sexual activity. Sexual activity can include vaginal, oral, or anal sex, and some infections can be transmitted through skin-to-skin contact.

Sexually transmitted infections (STI) are bacteria, virus, or parasites, and there are more than 20 known STI. Here is a list of common STI in each category:

<u>Bacteria</u>	<u>Virus</u>	<u>Parasite</u>
Chlamydia	Human papillomavirus (HPV); also known as genital warts	Trichomoniasis
Gonorrhea	HIV/AIDS	Pubic lice
Syphilis	Herpes	
	Hepatitis A, B, and C	

How are sexually transmitted infections treated?

STI caused by bacteria and parasites can be treated and cured, usually with prescription medications, but viral infections cannot be cured, although their symptoms can be managed. If you think you have a STI, it is important that you visit your health care provider immediately. Both you and your partner(s) will need to be treated in order to prevent re-infection.

Is it safe to use my bedroom accessories if I have a sexually transmitted infection?

If infected with a chronic and incurable STI, it is possible to use a sex toy in between outbreaks, as long as caution and time is invested to protect oneself. The best recommendation is not to use a sex toy while experiencing an outbreak (or symptoms of any kind). It is important to use a latex or polyurethane condom over anything that could be touching an infected area or come in contact with bodily fluids – that includes all types of toys, including those that are for external use. If you cannot put a condom over the toy, you should not use it. Also, make sure the toy is thoroughly cleaned before and after every use to reduce the risk of increased outbreaks. However, this is never a guarantee. You will always run the risk of causing additional outbreaks if you are not careful.

For a curable STI, the chance of re-infection could be high if you use a toy that is carrying the bacteria. If you think you have an infection and you are using a sex toy, discard the product and buy a new toy. Wait to use the toy until you have finished your medications and are no longer infected. Always make sure you clean your bedroom toy before and after every use to help reduce the risk of spreading bacteria, although Pure Romance's toy cleaner, Come Clean, will not remove bacteria, viruses, or parasites caused by a STI. Come Clean was designed to remove only everyday bacteria and fungi that grows naturally on bedroom accessories.

It is important to talk to your health care provider before engaging in any type of sexual activity if you have a STI. This will help maintain your health and will ensure that you are being as safe as possible.

