STDs and pregnancy

THE FACTS

- If you're pregnant and you have a sexually transmitted disease (STD), you may pass the infection to your baby.

- Every woman who is pregnant should be checked for some STDs during her first prenatal visit.

- You can have an STD without knowing it. Many STDs do not have symptoms.

- If you don't get treatment for an STD, it can lead to serious health problems for both you and your baby.

- Many STDs are easily treated and cured.

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HOW CAN PREGNANT WOMEN LOWER THEIR RISK FOR STDs?

- The surest way to reduce your risk of STDs during pregnancy is not to have sex or to have sex only with someone who's not infected and who has sex only with you.

- Condoms can reduce your risk of getting some STDs if used the right way every single time you have sex. A condom protects only the area it covers. Areas the condom doesn't cover can be infected.

- Washing the genitals, urinating, or douching after sex will not prevent any STD.

CAN I GET AN STD WHILE I'M PREGNANT?

Yes, you can get an STD while you're pregnant if you have sex with someone who has an STD. Being pregnant does not protect you or your baby against STDs. You may also get pregnant while you have an STD. If you are pregnant and have an STD, it may be important to get treatment.

HOW CAN AN STD AFFECT ME AND MY BABY?

- You may pass the infection to your baby before, during, or after the baby's birth.

- You could go into labor too early. This makes it more likely that your baby will be born weighing less than 5 pounds, which is less than a healthy newborn baby should weigh.

- A doctor might decide to do a cesarean delivery ("C-section") to protect your baby from infection.

- The infection may cause serious health problems in your baby.

WHEN SHOULD I BE TESTED?

- You should be tested the first time you see a doctor after you find out you're pregnant.

- Even if you've been tested for STDs in the past, you should be tested again when you become pregnant.

- It may be helpful for some of the tests to be done again when you get closer to your due date.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT IF I HAVE AN STD?

Most STDs can be found with a simple test. Not all doctors will routinely test pregnant women for STDs, so it's best to ask a doctor to check you for STDs.

It's a good idea to get tested for these STDs:

- Chlamydia (cla MI dee a)

- Hepatitis B

- HIV

- Syphilis (SI fi lis)

A doctor may also suggest that you be tested for gonorrhea (gon a REE a) and Hepatitis C.
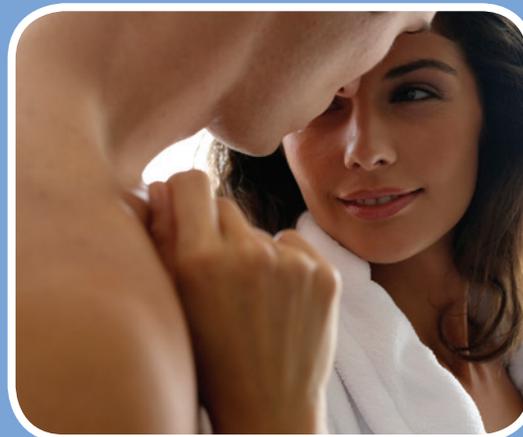
IF I HAVE AN STD, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR MY PARTNER?

- Your partner may have an STD too.

- Be sure to tell your recent sex partners, so they can get tested and treated if necessary.

- Avoid having sex until you've both finished your treatment, so you don't re-infect each other.

HOW ARE STDs TREATED?

- Many STDs can be treated and cured with antibiotics.

- Your doctor can recommend medicines to treat an STD that are safe to take while you're pregnant

- Finish all of the medicine to be sure you are cured.

- Do not share your medicine with anyone. You need all of it.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T GET TREATED?

If you don't treat an STD, the infection stays in your body. It may spread and cause serious health problems. You might also pass the STD to your baby. Many STDs can cause serious health problems for babies.

A MESSAGE FOR EVERYONE

PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR PARTNER.

Always see a doctor if your partner is being treated for an STD. Also see the doctor if you or your sex partner notice any symptoms, such as an unusual sore.

If you have an STD, you should be tested for others. Be sure to tell your recent sex partners, so they can get tested and treated if necessary. Talk openly and honestly with your partner about STDs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Talk to your doctor.
- Call 1-800-CDC-INFO.
- Visit www.cdc.gov/std/STDFact-STDs&Pregnancy.htm.

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