

STI/Condom Week



The aim of STI/Condom Week is to raise awareness around the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV & AIDS. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), more than 1 million STIs (sexually transmitted infections) are acquired worldwide every day, so educate yourself on the risks and don't be one of the statistics.

How are STIs transmitted?

While STIs are most often transmitted via sexual contact (including vaginal, anal, and oral sex), some can also be spread through non-sexual means (such as via blood transfusions or sharing needles) and be transmitted from mother to child during pregnancy and childbirth.

Common symptoms of STIs

Although it's important to know that some STIs don't display any symptoms, consult your doctor if you experience any of these warning signs:

- Vaginal discharge.
- Pain during urination.
- Urethral discharge or burning in men.
- Genital ulcers.
- Abdominal pain.

Treatment for STIs

STIs that are caused by bacteria can be treated. These include syphilis, gonorrhoea, chlamydia, and trichomoniasis.

STIs that are caused by a virus are incurable, and in these cases the viral infections can be reduced or modified through treatment. These STIs include hepatitis B, herpes, HIV, and human papillomavirus (HPV).

How can you prevent STIs?

Reduce your chances of acquiring an STI by:

- Getting tested and treated for STIs regularly. Previous infections with one or more STIs increase your risk of acquiring a new STI.
- Always practising safe sex and using a condom.
- Only having sex with a partner who has been tested for STIs, and who only has sex with you.
- Always using sterile or new needles and do not share drug-using equipment.

The health risks of STIs

Beyond the physical symptoms that a person might display, WHO also lists some of the long-term negative health consequences that can be caused by STIs:

- STIs can increase your risk of acquiring HIV (three-fold in the case of herpes and syphilis).
- HPV can cause cervical cancer in women.
- Gonorrhoea and chlamydia can cause pelvic inflammatory disease and infertility in women.
- Mother-to-child transmission of STIs can result in stillbirth, neonatal death, low birth weight and prematurity, sepsis, pneumonia, neonatal conjunctivitis, and congenital deformities.