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Bu bilgi, kolay okunurluk veya büyük baskılar gibi alternatif biçimlerde sunulabilir, ve talep üzerine Alternatif Dillerde sunulabilir. Daha fazla bilgi için klinik ekibinizle irtibata geçin.

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Patient information

Adjusting to sexually transmitted infections

What are sexually transmitted infections?

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infections that are passed on through sexual activity involving unprotected vaginal, anal or oral contact. STIs can also be transmitted by genital contact or sharing sex toys. Anyone who is sexually active is at risk of getting an infection, regardless of their number of sexual partners, gender, sexual orientation, social class, physical appearance or sexual history.

Sexually transmitted infections are very common, the most common being chlamydia, genital warts and genital herpes. Most STIs can be treated. Treatment is most effective when diagnosed and started early. Some infections (including genital warts and genital herpes) never leave the body, although medications can significantly reduce the symptoms.

If you think you may have a sexually transmitted infection you should visit your local sexual health clinic for a screening test.



Emotional impact

While it is very common to receive a diagnosis of an STI, some people can find it distressing. You may have questions around when and how you got the infection, and what this means to you and your identity. You may also feel embarrassed or worried about telling current or future sexual partners. These are all very common concerns and usually get much better with time.

Individuals diagnosed with certain STIs, such as genital warts or genital herpes, may feel worried about living with an infection and how to manage potential recurrences in the long-term. Some people with these conditions also notice a tendency to focus their attention on physical sensations in their genitals, which makes them become 'hypervigilant' to whether they are experiencing a recurrence of symptoms. While we don't know the exact relationship between emotional distress and STI recurrences, we do know that taking active steps to improve our overall wellbeing helps us to cope with any pressures or challenges in our lives. This may include getting regular exercise, getting in to a healthy sleep routine or cutting down on alcohol, smoking or any other recreational drugs.

Telling sexual partners

Telling someone about an STI for the first time may feel scary. It is important to remember that there is no 'right' or 'wrong' way of doing it and that it is up to you when or if you decide to tell someone. If you do decide to tell someone, it may be helpful to give them all the information they need to understand the STI and what it really means, perhaps by giving them a leaflet or directing them to a website (see the 'resources' section). Being straight forward and up front about an STI often helps others to feel confident that it is nothing to be ashamed of and it can be managed. For some STIs,

including genital warts and genital herpes, you are less likely to pass it on if you use condoms and do not have sex when you have symptoms. This means that some people choose only to tell regular sexual partners, although others may feel that they want to tell all sexual partners. Telling sexual partners about an STI is a personal decision and one that should work for you, in line with your beliefs and values.

Sometimes it may be too difficult or awkward for you to contact your recent sexual partners about your recent diagnosis of an STI. Your local sexual health service will provide assistance in making such disclosures. If needed, they can notify your recent sexual partners without disclosing your identity. For more information about partner notification, contact your local sexual health service.

Managing stigma or shame

Unfortunately there are many misconceptions about STI's in society that are both inaccurate and unhelpful. This can sometimes leave people with a feeling of embarrassment or shame. It is important to remember that it is not your fault that you have an STI and that having one does not say anything about the kind of person you are. Having sex is an important part of most people's lives and living with an STI should not change that.

Sometimes people find it harder to accept their diagnosis when they have regrets about the situation that led them to get an STI – for example, from unplanned sex or from someone that they are no longer in a relationship with. It is important to remember that learning how to negotiate sex and relationships is an important part of being human and that we cannot always predict the consequences of our actions.