

Woman to Woman

Sexually Transmitted Diseases: A Woman's Dilemma Part 2

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This article is intended to give you an overview of several sexually transmitted diseases including chlamydia trichomonas, yeast infections and venereal warts. If any of these symptoms fit you, it is advised that you see your physician for evaluation and treatment. The best way to prevent, treat and cure STD's is to have the facts and be responsible for your own sexuality.

Chlamydial infections are caused by an intracellular parasite that is now even more prevalent than gonorrhea. The organism can persist for months or years, and during this time the patient can transmit the infection. There is no specific symptom of chlamydial disease, but symptoms can include low abdominal pain or discomfort, increase abnormal vaginal discharge, urgency, or pain and burning with urination. If left untreated, the infection can cause infertility and tubal obstruction and pelvic inflammatory disease. Cultures can be done by your doctor to diagnose chlamydial infection. Treatment is with antibiotics for both partners.

Trichomonas is a single-celled protozoa that is contacted through intimate physical contact, usually sexual intercourse. Usually, a woman will experience increased vaginal discharge that is watery, yellow-greenish, and foamy in nature, sometimes associated with soreness and itching. The discharge may have an unpleasant odor, and painful urination or painful intercourse may be associated with it. Diagnosis is made by looking under the microscope and identifying the organism. Treatment consists of oral medication, and both partners need to be treated simultaneously.

Yeast infections are normally present in small amounts in the vagina of many women; however when the normal bacteria

in the vagina are destroyed the yeast organisms multiply. Yeast infections can be brought on by pregnancy, birth control pills, hormones, use of antibiotics or other circumstances that alter the normal vaginal flora. Yeast infections can be transmitted through sexual contact. Although males many times are not affected by the disease, they may unknowingly pass it to another partner. The typical yeast vaginal discharge is white, cheesy and associated with itching and redness of the vaginal and vulvar regions. It is diagnosed by looking under the microscope and identifying the yeast elements. There are a variety of vaginal creams to treat yeast infections. Recurrent yeast infections may require addition of oral Nystatin and evaluation of the male sexual partner who may be an asymptomatic carrier.

Venereal warts are caused by a virus and are similar to common skin warts except they appear in the genital regions. They also are transmitted through intimate sexual contact. Small warts can appear at the site where the infection enters the body approximately 1-3 months after contact with an infected person. They are usually easily diagnosed on gross examination by the doctor and can appear pinkish-gray with cauliflower-like heads. Small warts can be treated locally with podophyllin, and larger lesions may respond to cryosurgery, surgical excision or laser therapy.

Pubic lice are small, parasitic, crab-like organisms that infect the pubic hair. They are transmitted generally with close physical contact; however, in some cases, they may be transmitted through clothing, linens and toilet seats. Lice have a very short lifespan but frequently lay eggs which produce more lice in the pubic hair. Some people have no symptoms, while others experience severe

itching, and scratching can carry the lice to other areas of the body. Pubic lice are diagnosed by visual examination by a doctor. Treatment is usually satisfactory with applications of Kwell to the affected areas and disinfection of contaminated clothing and linen.

If you can identify with some of these sexually transmitted diseases, it is recommended you see a doctor who is familiar with STD's for evaluation and treatment of these. Several of these STDs, if left untreated are the main cause of infertility secondary to blocking tubes and PID may be transmitted by pregnant women to their children at birth. It is important that these STDs be appropriately diagnosed through necessary laboratory tests and cultures, and not only the patient but the sexual partner be treated.

It is the belief at Northwest Women's Clinic that is easier and takes less time, energy and expense to maintain your good health than to regain it once it is lost. Dr. Charochak's office is located at Northwest Women's Clinic in South Hill Puyallup at 8112 112th St. Ct. E. If you should desire an appointment, feel free to call 253-848-5555.