

Dr. doctor

Profession



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Dear Doctor, Yesterday, during lunch, my best friend and I were discussing sexually transmitted diseases and we got into quite a brawl about some of the myths and facts of them. It seemed like the only statement we both agreed on was that the topic about sexually transmitted diseases (and how each are transmitted and statistics) should be taught in school, just how biological information and abstinence are being educated. With that being said, I have quite a few questions to ask you. Is it still possible to get a sexually transmitted disease if you are abstinent?

If a person is infected with a sexually transmitted disease, can you tell by their appearance? Is there a higher chance that you will be infected by a sexually transmitted disease if you're in your teen years? Can STDs only spread through semen and blood? If a woman is on birth control, does that prevent her from obtaining an STD as well? Can you, in fact, catch an STD from a toilet seat? And lastly, once you have a sexually transmitted disease, there's no chance of becoming infected again, right?

These were a bunch of questions that seemed to be left unanswered yesterday and I was wondering if you might be able to clarify them for me as well as every other reader out there. Thank you Doctor. Sincerely, Confused reader. Dear "Confused reader", I do appreciate taking time to write to me about your questions and I also agree with you that the educational system should do more to inform the youth about sexually transmitted diseases before it may be too late. Also, as for your questions.. Yes, there is still a chance that one might become infected with a sexually transmitted disease while remaining abstinent. Abstinence does not prevent

AIDS, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C infections that come from nonsexual activities like using contaminated needles for doing drugs, unsterilized tattooing, or even taking steroids. You have no way of knowing if a person has a sexually transmitted disease just by looking at their appearance and observing how ‘ clean’ they are. Even doctors often can’t tell by looking if people have STDs; that’s why tests involving a patient’s blood work were made. Most STDs have very few signs or no signs at all. Only in really extreme cases of certain STDs could a person detect signs of an STD in the groin area; but don’t rely on it.

It’s even possible to carry and spread the virus without ever having an outbreak. The truth is, about one in four sexually experienced teens become infected with an STD. Unfortunately, you are correct on this one. Statistics show that two-thirds of sexually transmitted diseases occur in people who are under twenty- five and one in four girls between the ages of fourteen and nineteen were determined to have at least one of four sexually transmitted diseases (Human Papillomavirus [HPV], Chlamydia, Herpes Simplex Virus, and Trichomoniasis.).

Young people (ages from 15- 24) have five times the reported rate of Chlamydia of the total population, four times the reported rate of Gonorrhea, and three times the rate of Syphilis. While semen and blood can spread some sexually transmitted diseases, some STDs like herpes and syphilis can be spread by skin on skin contact. For example, when herpes flares up, an active sore appears on the person’s body and if this sore comes into contact with another person’s skin (or moist areas like the mouth, throat, and also areas with cuts and/ or rashes), it can spread.

However, it can also spread before the blisters actually form. I've actually heard these two myths before and never understood how they came about. The birth control pill has the potential to prevent one thing, the prevention of pregnancy from occurring. It holds no protection against sexually transmitted diseases. As for the myth about being able to get a sexually transmitted disease from a toilet seat, organisms cannot survive outside of the human body for a long period of time. Some STDs are yours for life, like herpes and HIV.

Others, like Chlamydia and Gonorrhea, can be treated; but you more likely to get infected again, since you are now vulnerable to the disease if you have sexual contact with someone who has them. In young girls, the second time you have Chlamydia, there's more damage to your reproductive tract, which may cause permanent infertility. I expect that you read everything that I have written and have more of an understanding on sexually transmitted diseases. Remember: No sex is always better than safe sex. Sincerely always, The Doctor.