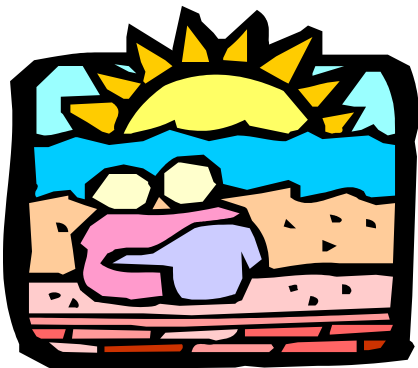


# Sex Talk

## Promoting Sexual Health for Youth

### Editor's note

HIV, gonorrhea, chlamydia, herpes - these are just a few of the infections a person can contract when having sex. Unsafe sex can cause a great deal of stress on the body; emotionally and physically. Sexually active people are often more concerned about an unwanted pregnancy, when in reality contracting a STI (sexually transmitted infection) can also have life long implications. The rates of STIs are highest amongst people ages 15–24. Despite this, anyone entering a new relationship needs to be aware that STIs exist in people of all ages.



## SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

Can you develop cancer from having sex? Hard to believe, but it is possible. A virus called HPV (human papilloma virus) may cause cervical cancer in some women. That's the bad news, but the good news is that there are ways to reduce the risk of contracting HPV.

HPV is one of many STIs that exist in our society and is most commonly known to cause genital warts. Both cervical cancer and genital warts are treatable but unfortunately there is no cure.

Debby Minielly, a public health nurse in the sexual health program notes that, "Even though HPV is one of the most common STIs, many people are quite unaware of it and don't understand the link between HPV, genital warts and cervical cancer." HPV is spread through intercourse, sexual touching and direct skin contact. Research estimates that 60 – 80% of people who have had sex have been exposed to the virus. However, many will never know it as they won't develop visible symptoms.

Delaying the first time one has intercourse is important. Minielly states, "Because cervical cells do not fully mature and thicken until at least age 18, postponing intercourse can be a healthy choice. We know that immature cells are more vulnerable to infection."

A *Pap Test* can screen for HPV. This test examines the cells that are growing on the cervix and detects early changes in the cells. (Other swabs that detect STIs can be done at the time of a pap - if you ask for them.) If a woman has been sexually active she needs to have a pap test every year until she is 70 years old, unless otherwise directed by her family doctor.

How can you reduce your risk of getting HPV? "Having fewer lifetime partners is a way of reducing one's risk of acquiring STIs," notes Tammy Allison, a public health nurse who works at the Sexual Health Clinic in Walkerton. "Consistent condom use from start to finish with every partner is important to protect your future."

The message for anyone who has had sex (or plans to): go for STI testing and use condoms consistently.

## Promoting Sexual Health for Youth

### HOW TO USE A CONDOM

- Store at room temperature in a dry place
- Use a new condom every time you have sex
- Check the expiry date
- Do not nick or tear the condom as you open it
- Hold the tip between two fingers to squeeze air out
- Unroll the condom over a hard penis
- Avoid using oil based lubricants
- After ejaculation, hold the condom firmly in place
- Pull out while the penis is still hard
- Remove the condom and be sure semen doesn't leak
- Tie the end of the condom in a knot
- Dispose of the condom (not down the toilet!)



### Teachers!

Write down each step of "How to Use a Condom" on a separate piece of bristol board. Hand out the steps to 12 students and ask them to arrange themselves in the correct order at the front of the room.



### **Do I Have An Infection?**

Some people with an STI have few or no symptoms at all; others have very obvious symptoms. Be aware of any changes in your health, or symptoms such as;

- Different or heavier discharge from the vagina (foul odour or greenish in colour)
- Discharge from the penis
- A burning sensation with urination
- Sores, particularly in the genital or anal areas
- Itchy or irritated around the sex organs or anus
- Appearance of a rash
- Swollen glands in the groin
- Discomfort during intercourse

Having a symptom doesn't mean that you have an STI but you should see a health professional if you notice any of the above mentioned symptoms.

Copied from the booklet *What You Need To Know About STI* by Health Canada, 2002.

### (CHLAMYDIA IS...)

- ✧ A bacterial infection
- ✧ The most common reportable sexually transmitted infection in Grey & Bruce counties among people aged 15 to 24
- ✧ Spread through unprotected vaginal, oral and anal sex
- ✧ Present without symptoms in approximately 80% of women and 50% of men infected
- ✧ An infection that may cause discharge from the vagina or penis, pain when passing urine, swelling in the lower abdominal area, or swelling in the testicles
- ✧ Detected by a urine specimen or swab
- ✧ Easily treated with antibiotics. A follow-up test is recommended 3 - 4 weeks after treatment to ensure the infection has been cured
- ✧ Known to cause pelvic inflammatory disease which can lead to infertility, ectopic pregnancies, or miscarriages if left untreated. Men with untreated chlamydia may become sterile as the tubes carrying sperm become blocked from scar tissue
- ✧ An infection that keeps in touch with partners of the past! Any sex partners of the past 3 months need to be advised that they have come into contact with the bacteria and should be tested

## A Personal Story from Grey Bruce

My boyfriend and I had been together for six years. We started going out in high school and he was my very first boyfriend.

One day I started to develop pain in my pelvic area. It hurt to go to the bathroom and I couldn't even sit down. I noticed that I had blisters all around my vaginal opening and I didn't have any idea what was happening to me. I showed my boyfriend and he seemed worried. I left it for a day and it only got worse.

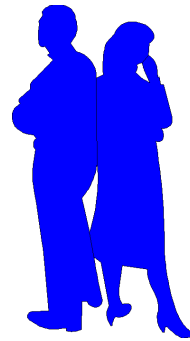
I finally went to see my doctor. The first question she asked me was "How many people have you had sex with besides your boyfriend?" I had never been with any other guy before in my life. She examined me and diagnosed me with herpes right away. She explained that my boyfriend must have contracted it and given it to me. I was shocked! How could this happen to me? I heard about people having STI's because they had sex with a lot of people. My doctor explained all of the facts about the virus and prescribed a drug to help suppress my outbreak.

Then I started to think back to a time when my boyfriend had a scab on the head of his penis. It was at least six months prior, but he told me that he caught his penis in his zipper and I believed him. A couple weeks after I was treated for herpes he finally admitted that he had sex with two other girls and was pretty sure he contracted herpes from them. Our relationship continued for a while until I realized how unhappy I was and the best thing for me was to move on.

A year later, I met a really great guy. I was ready to commit to a serious relationship but I didn't know how to tell him about the virus. I realized I could infect him, but it was just too hard to talk to him about it. Considering we had just met, I figured we would use condoms anyway. I didn't want to turn him away by telling him I had herpes.

After being together for 3 months we ended up having unprotected sex. I was so happy with him and I really thought he was the one. Feeling pretty comfortable in the relationship, I thought it was time to talk to him about herpes. I hadn't had another outbreak since the first one and he never had any signs or symptoms either.

One month after disclosing to him that I had herpes we broke up. He was so upset that I didn't tell him earlier. He told me that he wasn't attracted to me anymore. He didn't feel comfortable having sex with me because he felt dirty. I remember how terrified I was when diagnosed with herpes and I didn't deserve it. He had every right to know and maybe we would still be together today if I had talked to him about it in the beginning. I thought he was the best thing that ever happened to me. In the end, it made me realize that I have a virus I must deal with for the rest of my life. If only I had one more chance.



## Did You Know?

- At the end of 1999 there were approximately 49,800 people in Canada living with HIV and AIDS. Of the 49,800, an estimated 15,000 were living with HIV but were unaware that they were infected.
- In 2001, 45% of the AIDS cases among women were in those aged 15-29 years.
- The provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec account for 85% of the population of Canada and for 95% of HIV and AIDS diagnoses in Canada.
- According to estimates from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organization (WHO), 38.6 million adults and 3.2 million children were living with HIV at the end of 2002. This is more than 50% higher than the figures projected by WHO in 1991 on the basis of the data then available.

# Promoting Sexual Health for Youth

## Resources

### ☎ Sexual Health Clinics in Grey and Bruce

For a confidential clinic near you call:  
376-9420 or 1 800 821-7714

### ☎ Your Family Doctor

### ☎ AIDS and Sexual Health Info Line

1 800 668-2437

### ☎ Canadian HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse

[www.clearinghouse.cpha.ca](http://www.clearinghouse.cpha.ca)  
400-1565 Carling Avenue  
Ottawa, ON  
K1Z 8R1  
Toll Free: 1-877-999-7740

### ☎ Grey Bruce Health Unit Sexual Health Program

376-9420 or 1 800 821-7714

### Websites

[www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca](http://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca)  
[www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)  
[www.torontoherpes.com](http://www.torontoherpes.com)  
[www.ppt.on.ca](http://www.ppt.on.ca)  
[www.hepnet.com](http://www.hepnet.com)  
[www.sexualityandu.ca](http://www.sexualityandu.ca)  
[www.goaskalice.columbia.edu](http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu)  
[www.niaid.nih.gov](http://www.niaid.nih.gov)  
[www.clearinghouse.cpha.ca/](http://www.clearinghouse.cpha.ca/)  
[www.noah-health.org](http://www.noah-health.org)  
[www.afraidtoask.com](http://www.afraidtoask.com)  
[www.staying-alive.org/](http://www.staying-alive.org/)  
[www.avert.org/](http://www.avert.org/)



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To contribute ideas, comments or materials, contact the  
Sexual Health Program Manager, at  
519-376-9420 (1-800-263-3456) or fax 519-376-7782.  
Our website is: [www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca](http://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca)



### Grey Bruce Health Unit

Preventing Disease  
Promoting Health  
Protecting You