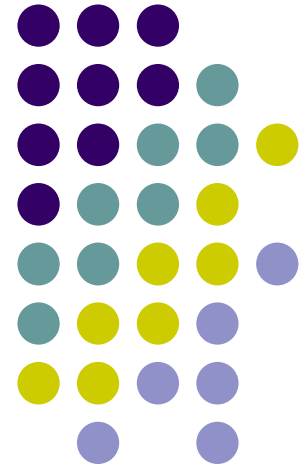
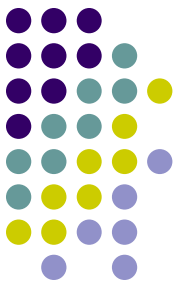


Understanding Sexually Transmitted Diseases



A sexually transmitted disease is an illness that you can catch by having sex.



- Sexually transmitted diseases are often called STDs.
- You can catch these diseases by having sex with a person who has an STD.
- There are many different types of STDs that have different signs and symptoms, but all STDs are passed from person to person during sex.



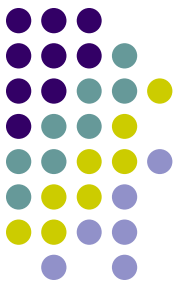
Anyone can get a sexually transmitted disease.



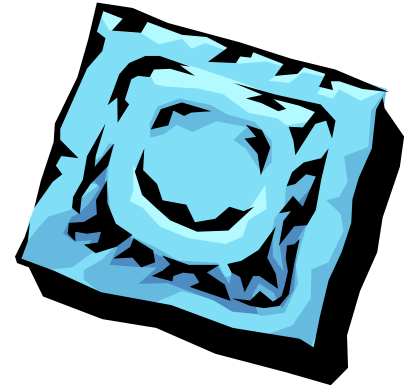
- STDs pass from person to person during sexual contact, such as:
 - During sex.
 - During other intimate sexual activity, such as oral sex.
- If you have sex or other sexual contact with a person who has an STD, you could catch the STD too.



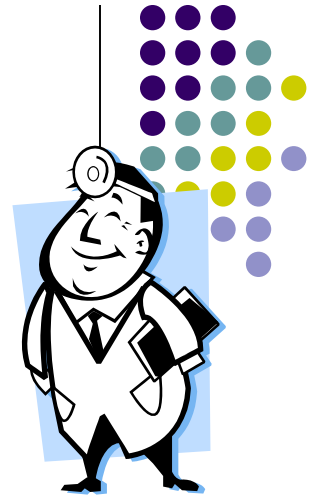
Some people are more likely than others to catch this kind of disease.



- You are more likely to catch an STD if:
 - You have sex with many different partners.
 - You have sex without using a condom.
- You can lower your chances of catching an STD by understanding what an STD is and learning what you can do to keep yourself safe!

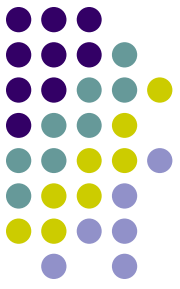


Individuals with developmental disabilities have the same sexual feelings as others.

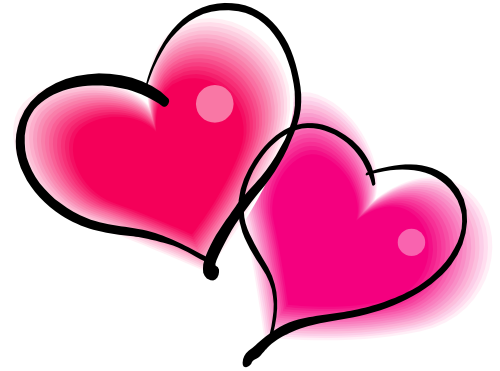


- If this is not understood, it can mean that:
 - Some doctors could be less likely to talk about safe sexual practices with people with developmental disabilities.
 - Some doctors could be less likely to examine people with developmental disabilities for STDs.
- This may put you at greater risk for developing an STD or having an STD that is not treated properly.

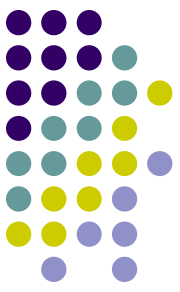
You can talk to your doctor or nurse about your sexual feelings.



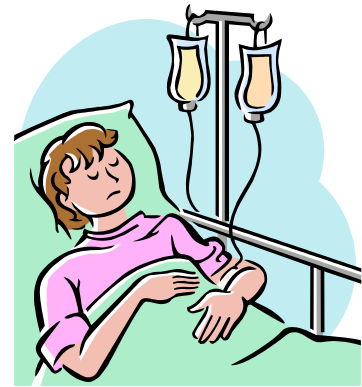
- People with developmental disabilities can have the same sexual feelings as everyone else!
- Let your doctor know if you are sexually active or if you are thinking about having sex for the first time.
 - This will tell your doctor that he or she should talk to you about ways to stay safe during sex and should examine you for STDs on a regular basis.



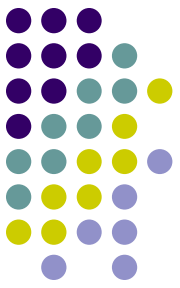
If you think you have an STD, it is important to talk to your doctor and get the proper treatment.



- Most STDs can be cured with the proper treatment!
- If you have an STD that is not treated properly, you can:
 - Spread the disease to people with whom you have sexual contact.
 - Get infections in other parts of your body.
 - Even die.



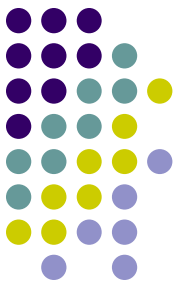
In women, untreated STDs can lead to a type of infection called pelvic inflammatory disease.



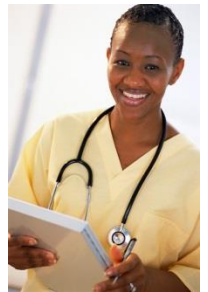
- Pelvic inflammatory disease is an infection in a woman's uterus, fallopian tubes, or ovaries.
 - These are the parts of a woman's body that help her get pregnant and have a baby.
- Untreated STDs such as chlamydia or gonorrhea can often lead to pelvic inflammatory disease.



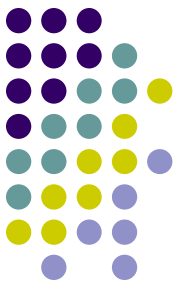
Pelvic inflammatory disease can cause infertility and ongoing pain.



- If you have a pelvic inflammatory disease that is not treated quickly:
 - You could have ongoing pain in your pelvic area.
 - You may not be able to get pregnant and have a baby.
- By learning the symptoms of STDs and seeing your doctor right away if you are experiencing these symptoms, you can prevent pelvic inflammatory disease in your body!



Each STD has different signs and symptoms.

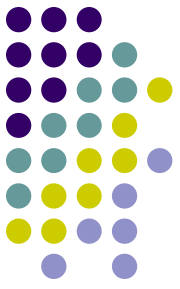


- Some STDs affect your sexual organs (like your vagina or penis).
- Other STDs can affect your whole body.
- Some STDs do not have any symptoms at all.
- This information sheet lists different STDs along with their symptoms and what can happen if you do not get treatment.



– <http://www.ddssafety.net/health/sexually-transmitted-diseases/std-information-sheet>

Some general signs that you may have an STD include:

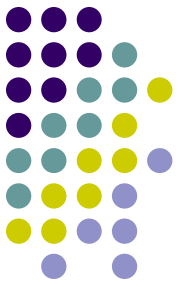


- Unusual discharge from your penis or vagina
- Unusual warts or blisters on your sexual organs
- Itching or burning around your sexual organs
- Burning or pain when you are going to the bathroom
- Needing to urinate more often than usual

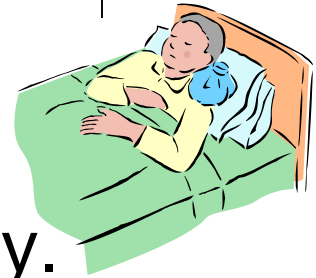


If you have any of these symptoms, tell your support provider or family member or visit your doctor for advice!

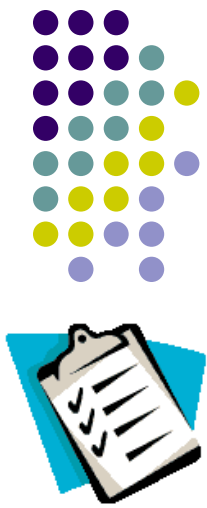
STDs can also cause symptoms in other parts of your body.



- You may also have an STD if you:
 - feel tired all of the time.
 - feel like you have a flu that won't go away.
 - have rashes on your body.
 - have diarrhea for an extended period of time.
- If you have any of these symptoms, you should also tell someone and then call your doctor for advice.
- These symptoms could mean you have an STD or some other illness that your doctor needs to know about.



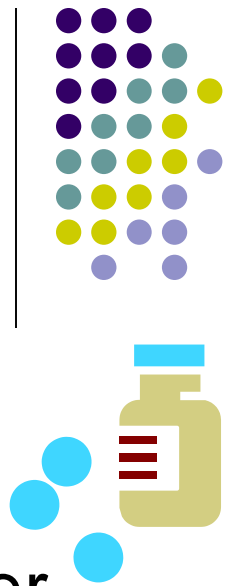
Your doctor will be able to tell if you have an STD.



- Before you visit your doctor, you and your support provider can write down your symptoms.
 - This list will help your doctor to find out what kind of illness you have.
 - Even if you do not have any symptoms, you can ask your doctor to test you for STDs on a regular basis if you are sexually active.
- Your doctor will talk to you about your symptoms, examine your body, and may perform some other medical tests.
 - This will let the doctor know if you have an STD and will help the doctor identify the STD you have.

Most STDs can be cured with medications!

- Once your doctor knows which STD you have, she or he will give you a prescription for the correct kind of pill.
 - Make sure you let the doctor know what other medications you are already taking, so that he or she can tell you if all of your medications are safe to take together.
- Other STDs cannot be cured, but medicines can help you feel better.
 - HIV cannot be cured, but medicines can help you live longer.
 - Herpes cannot be cured, but medicines can help relieve your symptoms.



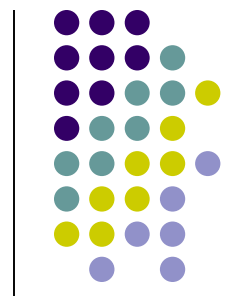
You can take actions to protect yourself from STDs.



- The only sure way to avoid a sexually transmitted disease is to not have sex.
- Whether or not you want to have sex is your choice.
- If you are thinking about having sex for the first time, you can let your doctor or nurse know.
 - Ask your doctor or nurse to tell you about how to stay safe while having sex.

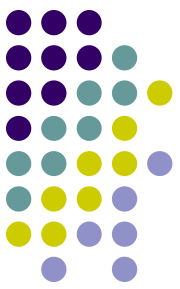


If you decide to have sex, there are actions you can take to lower your chances of catching an STD and developing pelvic inflammatory disease.



- Use a condom every time you have sex.
- Only have one sexual partner.
- Before you have sex with a new partner, make sure that you and your partner go to a doctor to be tested for STDs.
- Remember that birth control pills can protect you from getting pregnant, but they do not protect you from catching an STD.

You can learn more about STDs and how to protect yourself from these diseases!



- WebMD:
 - http://www.webmd.com/content/article/10/2953_511.htm
 - http://www.webmd.com/hw/chronic_pelvic_pain/hw43368.asp
- *The Riot* Self Advocacy Newsletter:
 - <http://www.theriotrocks.org>
- The Centers for Disease Control:
 - http://www.cdc.gov/std/healthcomm/fact_sheets.htm
- The National STD Hotline at 1-800-343-2437

