

### **Condoms and dental dams increase your safety.**

- ✓ For mouth-to-penis contact, cover the penis with a non-lubricated latex condom every time you have oral sex.
- ✓ For mouth-to-vagina or anus contact, use a dental dam (a square of latex) or a condom cut down the middle each time you have oral sex.
- ✓ Condoms and dental dams will greatly reduce the risk of STIs that are passed through body fluids.
- ✓ Condoms provide less protection from STIs that are passed through skin-to-skin contact (because they do not cover all areas of skin), but will still lower your risk.

### **Don't let someone pressure you into having any kind of sex!**

- ✓ Don't let anyone try to convince you that oral sex is not "real" sex, or that oral sex is automatically safe.
- ✓ Before you have oral sex, consider the risks and how you will protect yourself.
- ✓ Remember that oral sex carries many

of the same risks as vaginal and anal intercourse.

- ✓ Make good decisions for yourself, your health and your future.



**Protect your health! You can learn more about sexually transmitted infections and diseases from your local health department or health care provider. You can also visit [www.cdc.gov/std](http://www.cdc.gov/std).**

This pamphlet is not a substitute for medical care. If you have questions or concerns, please talk with a health care provider.

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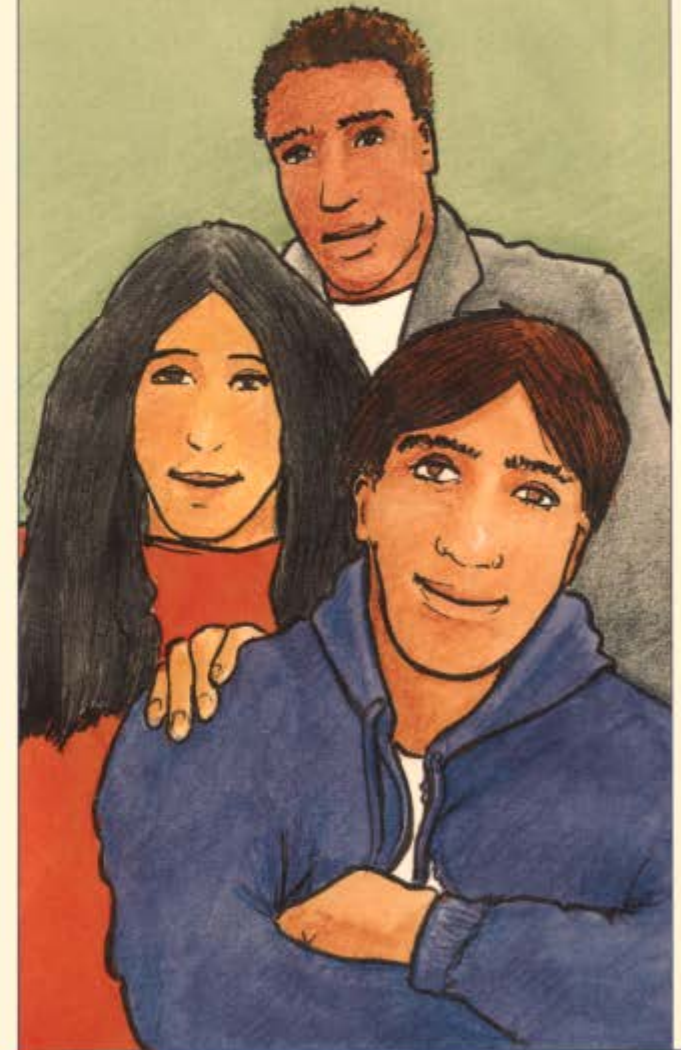
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SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

# STIs and Oral Sex



PROTECT YOUR HEALTH

There is a myth that oral sex is “safe” sex. The truth is that for some sexually transmitted infections and diseases (STIs or STDs), the risk from oral sex is similar to the risk from vaginal or anal intercourse. Get the facts about STIs, oral sex and how to protect yourself.

### STIs are common.

- ✓ There are many different types of STIs.
- ✓ STIs that can be passed through oral sex include gonorrhea, syphilis, HPV, herpes, hepatitis B and chlamydia.
- ✓ STIs can be passed to another person even when there are no obvious symptoms. You cannot always tell by looking if a person is infected with an STI.

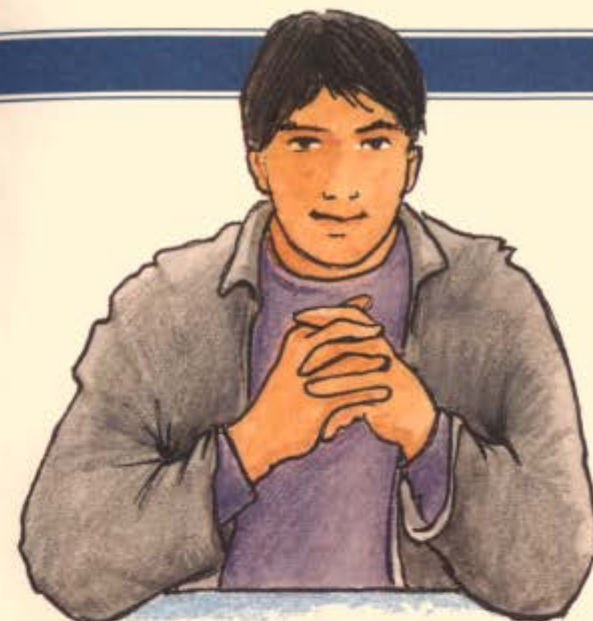
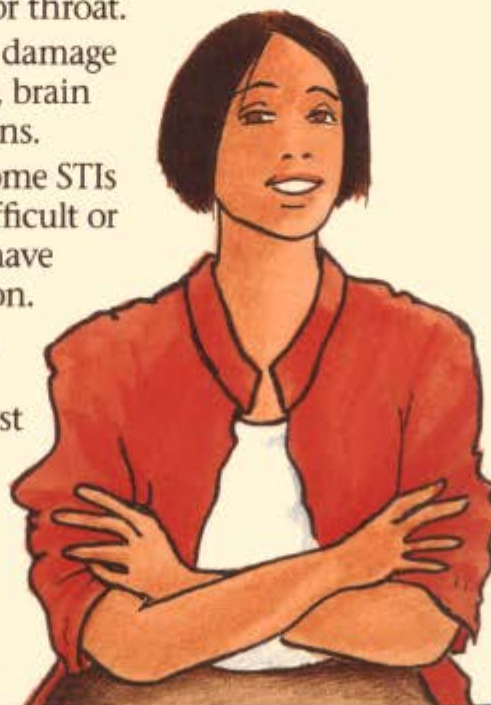


### Oral sex is not automatically safe.

- ✓ When you have oral sex, you can come into contact with another person’s skin and body fluids (semen, pre-cum, anal mucus, or vaginal fluid).
- ✓ Some STIs, like herpes or syphilis, can be passed through skin-to-skin contact. Others, like hepatitis B and HIV, are passed from person to person through body fluids.
- ✓ Bacterial infections like gonorrhea and chlamydia, can infect the throat.
- ✓ If your partner has an infection, you can get an STI in the mouth, throat, genitals, or rectum.

### STIs that can be passed through oral sex are serious.

- ✓ STIs that are passed through oral sex can sometimes cause sores or other symptoms in the mouth or throat.
- ✓ Some STIs can damage the liver, heart, brain and other organs.
- ✓ If untreated, some STIs can make it difficult or impossible to have children later on.
- ✓ Some STIs will stay in your body for the rest of your life.



### What about HIV?

- ✓ According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the risk of becoming infected with HIV through oral sex is much lower than it is through vaginal or anal sex.

### You can reduce your risk.

- ✓ Sexual abstinence – or choosing not to have vaginal, anal or oral sex – is the most reliable protection from STIs.
- ✓ If you choose to have sex, safer oral sex is just as important as safer vaginal or anal sex. Be prepared to talk to your partner and insist on safer oral sex.
- ✓ Having sex with only one uninfected partner who is also having sex with only you will also lower your risk of getting STIs.
- ✓ Talk to a health care provider about vaccines to protect against HPV and hepatitis B.
- ✓ Know your HIV and STI status. Get tested.