



## Reproductive Health Concerns for Both Sexes

Both genders can develop sexually transmitted infections (STIs) that can affect their reproductive health.

### STIs: What You Need to Know

- There are over 20 types
- Effects can be more severe for women
- Can cause serious health effects for babies whose mothers have an STI
- Many STIs have only mild symptoms or no symptoms
- Get tested so that you can be treated

### Protect Yourself Against STIs

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are also called sexually transmitted infections, or STIs. STIs are usually spread by having vaginal, oral, or anal sex. Women often have more serious health problems from STIs than men, including infertility.

### If you are sexually active, you can lower your risk of getting an STI by:

- Getting vaccinated to protect against HPV and hepatitis B
- Using condoms
- Getting tested
- Being monogamous
- Limiting your number of sex partners
- Not douching
- Not abusing alcohol or drugs

### HPV Vaccine

The human papillomavirus, or HPV, causes nearly all cervical cancers and some vaginal and vulvar cancers in women. In men, it can cause penile cancer, and it can cause throat and anal cancer in both sexes. More than half of all sexually active people will contract HPV during their lifetime.

While HPV often has no symptoms and goes away by itself, it can also linger and create abnormal cells, boosting your risk for cancer. The HPV vaccine, a series of three shots that protect against the virus, is recommended for girls and boys starting at age 11 or 12, and for teens and adults ages 13 to 26 who did not receive the vaccine at a younger age. If you are older than 26 and have not had the HPV vaccine, talk to your doctor to see if it's right for you.

You should see your healthcare provider immediately if you notice any abnormal skin growths or changes in your genital, anal, or throat areas. These may be early signs of cancerous growths.

**HIV/AIDS** - Human immunodeficiency virus can destroy cells so that the body can't fight off infection. AIDS is the late stage of HIV. There is no cure, but the virus can be controlled.

HIV/AIDS is a disease of the immune system, and is not exclusively transmitted through sexual contact, but unprotected sexual activity is one of the ways that the HIV virus is spread.

### Choose Your Partner Wisely

- Your partner should make you feel good to be around and treat you well
- Communication is the key to a healthy relationship
- Your partner should respect your wishes, feelings, and the decisions you make about your body

### NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

Advocates are available 24/7 at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) in more than 200 languages. All calls are free and confidential. Chat online at [www.thehotline.org/help/](http://www.thehotline.org/help/)

### 5 STEPS TO PROTECTING YOUR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

- 1 Take control of your health by visiting your healthcare provider regularly for checkups and screenings.
- 2 Reduce your risk of getting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) by protecting yourself and your partner(s). Untreated STIs can have a lasting effect on your health and can lead to infertility. Visit your healthcare provider for testing if you have symptoms or questions. Some STIs do not have symptoms, so it's important to get tested even if you don't notice anything unusual.
- 3 Don't be embarrassed to talk to your healthcare provider about any reproductive issues. Chances are, they have heard it all before and can help you find solutions.
- 4 Use contraception to avoid an unwanted pregnancy. Research shows that planned pregnancies result in healthier babies, moms and families. Talk to your healthcare provider about the contraception that is best for you.
- 5 Avoid and remove yourself from abusive situations and unhealthy relationships. Your partner should respect the decisions you make about your body, treat you well and make you feel good about yourself.



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Nothing is more important to us than ensuring that you receive a positive experience at our hospital. Whether you are delivering a baby, having surgery, or receiving emergency treatment or other services, we remain committed to providing you the best care, close to home.

Safety is at the foundation of our care, and we value your continuing trust in our hospital. As always, we remain prepared to treat you at our hospital in a safe environment. You can visit us with confidence knowing that we will do everything we can to not only make your experience positive, but also as safe as possible. We are here for you.

Just like our hospital systems need to be healthy to work efficiently and properly to perform at our best, so do the systems of the human body.

### Understanding Your Reproductive System

The reproductive system consists of internal and external organs and glands that work together for procreation.

#### In women, it consists of the:

- Ovaries
- Fallopian tubes
- Uterus
- Cervix

#### In men, it consists of the:

- Prostate
- Testes
- Penis

Reproductive disorders affect millions of Americans each year.

### Infertility by the Numbers:

- About 9% of men and about 11% of women of reproductive age in the United States have experienced fertility problems
- 12% of women aged 15 to 44 years in the United States have difficulty carrying a pregnancy to term
- In 35% of couples with infertility, a male factor is identified along with a female factor
- 1/3 of couples in which the woman is older than 35 years have fertility problems

### Female Reproductive Health Concerns

#### Infertility Risk Factors for Women

- Age
- Excessive alcohol use
- Extreme weight gain or loss
- Excessive physical or emotional stress

**Endometriosis** - Tissue that normally lines the uterus grows on the ovaries, behind the uterus, on the bowels, on the bladder, or elsewhere.

- Effects more than 11% of women between 11 and 44
- More common among women in their 30s and 40s

#### Symptoms:

- Pain typically in the abdomen, lower back, or pelvic area
- Infertility
- Heavy periods

Some women have no symptoms. Trouble conceiving may be the first sign they have endometriosis.

**Treatment: Medicine, Surgery**



**Uterine Fibroids** - Noncancerous growths in the uterus or womb

**Symptoms:**

- Heavy or painful periods
- Bleeding between periods
- Feeling of fullness in lower abdomen
- Frequent Urination
- Pain during sex
- Lower back pain
- Reproductive problems including infertility, multiple miscarriages, or early labor

Some women will have no symptoms, so it's important to see your healthcare provider for regular exams.

**Treatment:**

- Medicine
- Surgery

**Gynecologic Cancer** - Any cancer that starts in a woman's reproductive organs, including:

- Cervical
- Ovarian
- Uterine
- Vaginal
- Vulvar

**Symptoms:**

It is important to pay attention to your body and know what is normal for you to help you recognize the warning signs or symptoms of gynecologic cancer.

**Talk to your healthcare provider if you notice:**

- Your periods are heavier
- Your periods are lasting longer than normal for you
- You are having unusual bleeding between periods
- You are experiencing bleeding after menopause

**Treatment:**

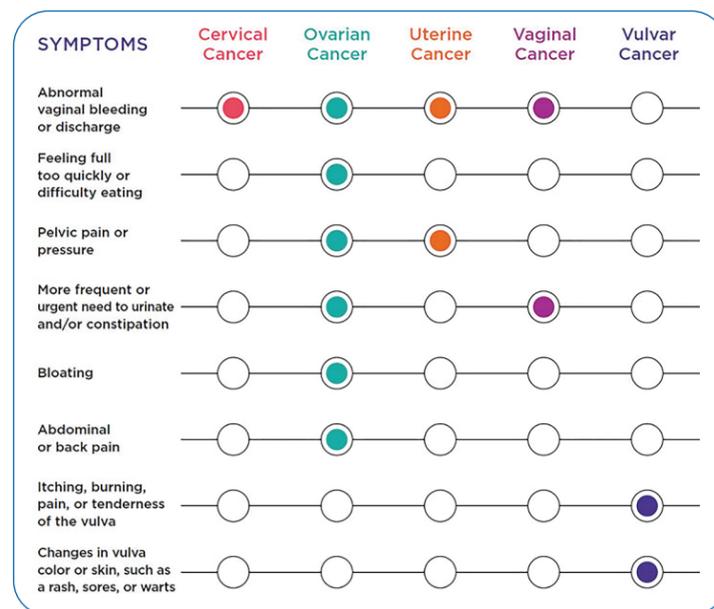
- Surgery
- Chemotherapy
- Radiation

**Interstitial Cystitis** - Chronic bladder condition that results in recurring discomfort or pain in the bladder or pelvic region.

**Symptoms:**

- Abdominal or pelvic mild discomfort
- Frequent urination
- Urgency to urinate
- Feeling of abdominal or pelvic pressure
- Tenderness
- Intense pain in the bladder or pelvic region
- Severe lower abdominal pain that intensifies as the urinary bladder fills or empties

This chart will help you identify specific symptoms of the different types of gynecologic cancer. Always contact your healthcare provider if you have any of these symptoms so you can rule out cancer, and if it is, you can receive early treatment which may lead to the best possible outcomes for your health.



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**Treatment:**

- Lifestyle changes
- Bladder training
- Physical therapy
- Medicine
- Bladder hydrodistension
- Bladder instillation
- Surgery
- Combination of these treatments

**Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)** - Occurs when a woman's ovaries or adrenal glands produce more male hormones than normal. Causes cysts, or fluid-filled sacs, to develop on the ovaries. Women with PCOS have a higher risk of getting heart disease and diabetes.

PCOS affects 1 in 10 women of childbearing age.

**Symptoms:**

- Pelvic pain
- Excess hair growth
- Baldness/thinning hair
- Acne
- Oily skin
- Dandruff
- Patches of thickened dark skin

There is no cure, but you can work with your healthcare provider to manage your symptoms depending on whether or not you plan to have children and your risk of long-term health problems.

**Treatment to manage symptoms:**

- Losing weight
- Medicine

**Male Reproductive Health Concerns**

Both men and women can contribute to infertility.

Couples where a male factor is the only identifiable cause of infertility=8%

**Infertility Risk Factors for Men**

- Age
- Being overweight
- Smoking
- Excessive alcohol use
- Use of marijuana
- Exposure to testosterone
- Frequent exposure of the testes to high temperatures
- Exposure to certain medications
- Exposure to environmental toxins

**Infertility in men can be caused by different factors including:**

Disruption of Function as a Result of:

- Varicoceles—similar to a varicose vein on the testicles that cause low sperm production/quality
- Trauma that may affect sperm production
- Unhealthy habits including:
  - ▶ Heavy alcohol use
  - ▶ Smoking
  - ▶ Steroid use
  - ▶ Illicit drug use
- Use of certain medications and supplements
- Cancer treatments including:
  - ▶ Chemotherapy
  - ▶ Radiation
  - ▶ Surgery to remove one or both testicles
- Medical conditions such as:
  - ▶ Diabetes
  - ▶ Cystic fibrosis
  - ▶ Some autoimmune disorders
  - ▶ Certain types of infections
- Hormonal disorders
- Genetic disorders
- Possible environmental factors

**Erectile Dysfunction**

Erectile dysfunction (ED) is the inability to get and keep an erection firm enough for sex. If ED is an ongoing issue, it can cause stress, affect your self-confidence and contribute to relationship problems. ED can also be a sign of an underlying health condition that needs treatment, and is a risk factor for heart disease.

If you experience ED, don't be embarrassed to talk to your healthcare provider. Treating an underlying condition can reverse ED, and medications or other direct treatments can also help.

**Low Testosterone**

Testosterone is a hormone produced by our bodies. Testosterone hormone levels are important for normal male sexual development and functions. You can be born with low testosterone (Low-T), or can develop it later in life.

Normal testosterone level=300-1,000 ng/dL

Low testosterone (Low-T)=below 300 ng/dL

% of men aged 45+ who have Low-T=40%

**Risk Factors**

Testosterone levels drop as men age. However, the following conditions can increase the risk:

- Injury
- Infection
- Chemotherapy for cancer
- Medications used to treat prostate cancer, such as hormones and steroids
- Chronic illness
- Stress
- Alcohol abuse
- Obesity

**Signs & Symptoms**

- Low sex drive
- ED
- Fatigue
- Loss of muscle strength
- Irritability
- Depression

**Treatment**

Low-T can sometimes be treated with testosterone replacement therapy, including:

- Skin patch
- Gels
- Oral therapy
- Pellets placed under the skin
- Injections

**Male testosterone levels by age**



10



20



30



40



50



60



70



80



90