

Grade 8: Healthy Habits

Lesson 5: Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

- ***(NOTE TO TEACHERS: Parental permission may be needed for these lessons.)***

Objectives:

1. Students will explore the causes, symptoms, and consequences of common STDs.
2. Students will compare and contrast common STDs.
3. Students will explain how to protect themselves from STDs.
4. Students will discuss concerns and issues to consider when deciding to be sexually active.
5. Students will explore the considerations for making abstinence a positive choice.

Materials:

- Truth or Consequences Questionnaire **(See Figure 1)**
- Common STDs chart. **(See Figure 2)**

Activity Summary:

In this lesson students will explore STD causes, symptoms, and consequences, Choosing abstinence and the pressures and risks of being sexually active will also be discussed.

Background Information for the Teacher:

Sexually transmitted diseases, commonly referred to as STDs, are infectious diseases spread through sexual contact. Once known as venereal disease (or VD) STDs are a serious health risk for teens. Of the new cases of sexually transmitted diseases each year, upwards of 25% occur in 15- to 19-year-olds. While teens may consider embarrassment the major risk of contracting an STD, the real risks are far more serious and include a variety of health difficulties including sterility, infertility, and even death.

How STD's are Spread:

- Sexual intercourse
- Skin-to-skin contact with an infected area
- Oral and anal sex

The chances of getting an STD increase the younger a person is when they become sexually active; the number of sexual partners they have; and from practicing unprotected sex.

It is far better to **prevent** contracting a sexually transmitted disease than to treat it. Certainly the most foolproof prevention is sexual abstinence. The only sexual protection that lessens the STD risk is latex condoms. Spermicides, diaphragms and other birth control protection methods **do not** provide STD protection.

STD's present particularly challenging health risks, including:

- No immunity to STDs can be developed.
- People with STDs may not exhibit any symptoms.
- No vaccines (other than for Hepatitis B) are currently available.

Appearances can definitely be deceiving with STDs. Early, accurate diagnosis is essential so that appropriate treatment can be given. Early detection and treatment may minimize some of the more serious effects of STDs.

(NOTE: Information about specific sexually transmitted diseases is provided in the Common ST's chart at the end of the lesson.)

Making a Decision

The decision to be sexually active or not is very difficult for a young person. Many variables influence this choice, including:

- Potential for pregnancy
- Short- and long-term health consequences
- Social, family, and spiritual values
- Peer pressure
- Potential impact on life

Significant and difficult consequences can result from this life-altering decision.

Although it may seem that way to teenagers, love and sex are **not** the same thing. Sex is a biological activity, while love is a feeling with a wide range of meaning and intention. Sexual expression can certainly be a part of loving someone, but it is possible to love someone deeply and be physically attracted to him or her while choosing to refrain from being sexually active. Conversely, it is also possible to be sexually intimate with someone we don't love. There are many permutations and indeed it can be bewildering.

The following information is adapted from an article entitled, "Sex on the Brain: Yes or No?" located on the American Social Health Association website at www.iwannaknow.org.

Why Don't Teens Protect Themselves If They Are Having Sex?

- Embarrassment about obtaining condoms
- Peer/date pressure
- Use of alcohol and/or drugs
- A lack of knowledge about possible sexual consequences
- A belief that using birth control pills is sufficient protection
- Resistance to asking questions
- Absence of forethought

Choosing “No”

Questions To Ask Yourself:

- Am I really ready to have sex?
- How am I going to feel about myself after I have sex?
- How am I going to feel about my partner afterwards?
- Am I doing this for the right reasons?

Questions About Your Upbringing:

- How do your parents feel about you having sex?
- What is the position of your church, synagogue or temple on the subject?
- Will you have to lie about having sex later?
- Will you feel guilty?

Questions About Your Health:

- How do you plan to protect yourself from sexually transmitted diseases or pregnancy?
- Will your decisions affect your mental or social health?
- Are you well informed regarding the possible consequences of a pregnancy or an STD?

Important Things to Remember:

- You are never truly alone. There is always help somewhere for you. Find a friend you trust, your school nurse or counselor, or maybe even your mom or dad. Talk with them.
- A local STD clinic will help you know what you can be tested for and when testing will be accurate. Remember, even if you previously decided to have sex, you can choose not to have sex again until you're ready.

Something to Think About:

Deciding to have sex or not is probably one of the biggest decisions you will have to make. But the bottom line is this: ***You do not have to have sex until YOU are ready.*** It's OK to decide to wait to have sex if that is what you wish. Sex can be fun, but "fun" only lasts for a moment. Other possible consequences of

sex, such as an STD or an unplanned pregnancy, can last a lifetime. Finally, whatever your decision is, be prepared to have to look at yourself in the morning.

What if Sex Was Forced?

If you live in an abusive household or if you are a survivor of rape or date rape, seek help immediately so that you can feel safe and start to heal. Rape is a frightening experience and can cause you to feel guilty, angry, dirty and responsible. Always remember that **it was not your fault** and seek immediate assistance. School counselors or local rape crisis centers can be helpful.

Some girls think it's cool to date older guys. Just remember that older guys may be ready for sex when you're not. If you have an older boyfriend who wants to have sex, **remember: it's YOUR choice; YOU decide.**

Choosing "Yes"

Deciding to have sexual intercourse with another person is a very personal and private matter. Only you, and no one else, should make that decision. You owe it to yourself to think carefully about your body, emotions, personal values and life goals so that you can make a wise choice regarding if, when and how you choose to have sex.

Why Do Some Teens Have Sex?

As you read this list of some of the reasons teens give for having sex, think of which of these reasons most influences you. Do you think these are good reasons or bad reasons to make this choice?

Some Teenagers Have Sex Because:

- They want to feel accepted.
- It feels good.
- It's "cool" to have sex.
- It's easier to have sex than to talk about it or say "no."
- They want to feel close to someone.
- They feel peer pressure.
- They're in love.
- They want to experiment.
- They have raging hormones.

Answer These Questions Before You Decide to Have Sex:

- Is this something I really want to do at this point in my life?
- Am I emotionally ready for all the feelings a sexual relationship brings up?
- Am I ready to be a parent if this produces a baby?
- Am I taking precautions to prevent sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or pregnancy?
- Am I being pressured into having sex even though it's not what I want to do?

- Am I going to feel bad afterwards because this goes against my personal values?

Abstinence

Being sexually abstinent is a good choice. It is a responsible choice. It is a choice that demonstrates respect for yourself and the other person. And it can be a hard choice to stick with.

So it is key to surround yourself with like-minded friends. Being with your peers, other people who share the same values and goals as you do, can be very important in helping you stick to what you know is best for you.

Choosing abstinence is a proactive and positive choice for you. Make it an active choice. Clarify for yourself your reasons for choosing abstinence. Consider and answer the following four questions. When you do you will make the decision “your decision”. You will own it, and that will help you stay true to your own positive choice.

- 1. What are *your* reasons for practicing abstinence?**
- 2. How does choosing abstinence protect *you*?**
- 3. What are the rewards *you* will get with your choice?**
- 4. Who and what will support *you* in maintaining your choice?**

As you explore these four questions, carefully consider YOUR:

- Family
- Friends
- Self-esteem
- Values (personal, cultural, family and spiritual)
- Goals
- Physical health
- Mental and emotional health.

Vocabulary:

Sexually transmitted disease
AIDS - Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus
Chlamydia
Bacterial infection
Virus infections
Sterility
Infertility
Genital herpes
Genital warts

Gonorrhea
Hepatitis B
Pelvic Inflammatory Disease
Pubic Lice
Syphilis
Abstinence

Engage:

This may be done in groups or individually. Have the students complete the questionnaire: Truth or Consequences, or What You Don't Know and Don't Want to Believe Can Hurt You (attached at the end of the lesson **See Figure 1.**)

Have students answer all thirteen questions and give reasons why they think they gave the correct answer. Have the groups present their answers and reasons for class discussion. Use the discussion to provide accurate information.

Explore:

Group - Have students search and explore in-depth information about the sexually transmitted diseases: AIDS, HIV, Chlamydia, genital herpes, genital warts, gonorrhea, hepatitis B, pelvic inflammatory disease, pubic lice, syphilis. Working in groups, assign a different STD to each group. Additionally, have one group explore resources (people, organizations, health and advocacy groups, etc.) that can assist with and/or educate people regarding STDs, including HIV/AIDS.

Each group should examine more thoroughly the signs and symptoms, treatment options, myths and the fact about that STD. Assign group presentations that include a visual element.

Optional: Students may wish to organize a panel discussion featuring experts on this subject. Have the panel meet with the class to give information and answer questions.

Explain:

1. Begin by having students present.
2. Guide students and share the following information:
3. Ask: ***“What’s different about STDs and other health problems?”*** (No immunity to STD’s can be developed; people with STDs may not show or feel any symptoms; and no vaccines other than for Hepatitis B and Human Papillomavirus (HPV) are currently available.
4. Have the students read the **Common STDs** chart. **(See Figure 2)** Have each student analyze the information and create a graphic organizer to compare and contrast the information.

5. Use student presentations about the information on the charts to facilitate discussion.
6. Have students evaluate their personal situation regarding the pressure to be sexually active. Ask students to create a scale from one to ten on a piece of paper, with the rating of one indicating “No Pressure” and ten indicating “Way Too Much Pressure.”
7. Focus attention on helping students think through their situation. (The following are some questions that can be used for clarification):

Questions About Yourself:

- Am I really ready to have sex?
- How am I going to feel about myself after I have sex?
- How am I going to feel about my partner afterwards?
- Am I doing this for the right reasons?

Questions About Your Upbringing:

- How would your parents feel about you having sex?
- What is the position of your church, synagogue or temple on the subject?
- Will you have to lie later about having sex?
- Will you feel guilty?

Questions About Your Health:

- How do you plan to protect yourself from sexually transmitted diseases or pregnancy?
- Will your decisions affect your mental or social health?
- Are you well-informed regarding the possible consequences of a pregnancy or an STD?

Answer These Questions BEFORE You Decide to Have Sex:

- Is this something I really want to do at this point in my life?
- Am I emotionally ready for all the feelings a sexual relationship brings up?
- Am I ready to be a parent if this produces a baby?
- Am I taking precautions to prevent sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or pregnancy?
- Am I being pressured into having sex even though it's not what I want to do?
- Am I going to feel bad afterwards because this goes against my personal values?

8. Ask students if they consider abstinence to be 1) a proactive choice that they want to make; or 2) a choice they “have” to make but are not sure they want to.

9. Allow students to share their thoughts and feelings about abstinence.
10. Ask: **“How can you make abstinence a choice you want to make? What questions would you examine?”** Encourage discussion and clarify the following four key questions that can help the students “own” abstinence as a choice they want for themselves and can commit to:
 1. **What are your reasons for practicing abstinence?**
 2. **How does choosing abstinence protect you?**
 3. **What are the rewards you will get from your choice?**
 4. **Who and what will support you in maintaining your choice?**

Extend:

Individual - Put the four questions on choosing abstinence into practice by having students examine each question thoroughly and determine for themselves what their answers are.

Have them consider each of the following areas when answering the four questions: Your **family**, your **friends**, your **self-esteem**, your **values** (personal, cultural, family, spiritual), your **goals**, your **physical health**, and your **mental and emotional health**.

Write an expository paper that addresses and answers each question.

Evaluate:

Group presentations from the “Explore” portion should be used as a tool for evaluation. The “Extend” activity should also be evaluated.

Have students create an **STD Fact Sheet**. Factual information about five of the STDs should be given, along with the causes, consequences, symptoms, and treatment. This information can be gathered both from the **Common STDs Chart** and the presentations at the completion of the Explore group activity.

Additional Web Resources:

- American Social Health Association - <http://www.iwannaknow.org/>
- KidsHealth.org - www.kidshealth.org
Search: Teen Health – About Sexually Transmitted Diseases.
- Centers for Disease Control - <http://www.cdc.gov/>
- MedLine Plus - <http://search.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus>

- AIDS Healthcare Foundation – www.aidshealth.org

Missouri Standards

Health and Physical Education Frameworks

III. Risk Assessment and Reduction

What All Students Should Know:

1. Communicable diseases are caused by pathogens including bacteria, virus, fungi, and parasites.

What All Students Should Be Able To Do:

- a. Use a variety of resources to compile information regarding the cause, transmission, treatment and prevention of communicable disease

Figure 1

**Truth or Consequences Questionnaire, or
What You Don't Know and Don't Want to Believe Can Hurt You**

1. You can always tell by someone's appearance whether or not they have an STD.
2. You cannot build immunity to sexually transmitted diseases.
3. Birth control protection methods also protect against contracting an STD.
4. There is no risk of death from an STD other than HIV/AIDS.
5. HIV can survive in the air.
6. You can have an STD and not realize it.
7. If you suspect you have an STD over-the-counter medications are available.
8. The best protection from an STD is sexual abstinence and not injecting drugs.
9. STDs are spread only through sexual intercourse.
10. Once an STD has been properly treated, there is no risk of recurrence.
11. Closed-mouth kissing does not spread HIV.
12. Most STDs can be cured.
13. HIV is passed through the passage of body fluids from one person to another.

Answers

1. No – The disease may be active in the body even though symptoms may not be evident.
2. Yes
3. No – Only latex condoms can offer protection. Diaphragms and spermicides do not protect.
4. No – Death can result from syphilis.
5. No – HIV is not an airborne virus.
6. Yes - The disease may be active in the body even though symptoms may not be evident.
7. No – a medical doctor who can prescribe the correct treatment must properly diagnose STDs.
8. Yes – Definitely.
9. No – STDs can also be spread from skin-to-skin contact with an infected area, as well as from oral and anal sex.
10. No – There is no immunity from STDs. They can recur.
11. Yes – Open-mouth kissing can spread HIV if both persons have a cut or open sore in the mouth.
12. No – STDs cannot be cured, although most can be treated.
13. Yes

Figure 2:**COMMON SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES**

NAME	WHAT HAPPENS	CAUSED BY	TREATMENT	CONSEQUENCES
AIDS: Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus	HIV attacks the immune system resulting in AIDS. <i>Disease may be active even if no visible signs are present.</i>	Virus infection	Medications can manage infection. No cure.	Severe compromise to the immune system leading to death from opportunistic infections.
CHLAMYDIA	Scarring of reproductive organs; burning during urination; genital irritation. <i>Disease may be active even if no visible signs are present.</i>	Bacterial infection	Antibiotics	Sterility from the scarring.
GENITAL HERPES	Painful blisters in genital area, fever, burning when urinating. <i>Disease may be active even if no visible signs are present.</i>	Virus infection from contact with infected person.	No cure. Some symptom relief with medication.	Increases HIV infection risk; brain damage or death of newborns of infected mother.
GENITAL WARTS	Wart growth on genitals, and cervix in females 3 weeks - 6 months after contact.	Virus infection from contact with infected person.	Topical medication, surgery to remove warts.	Reproductive system cancer; urinary blockage in men; infection in newborn infants.
GONORRHEA Known as "the clap"	Pain or burning on the penis, vagina, or anus. <i>Disease may be active even if no visible signs are present.</i>	Bacterial infection from contact with infected person.	Antibiotics (some strains are drug-resistant) Penicillin.	Sterility; potentially permanent damage to joints and organs; infection of developing fetus.
HEPATITIS B	Fatigue, nausea, jaundice of the skin, joint pain.	Virus infection from contact with infected person.	Vaccine	Damage to liver; liver cancer; infection of developing fetus.
PELVIC INFLAMMATORY DISEASE	Affects only females, Foul-smelling discharge, fever, vomiting, backache and abdominal tenderness.	Bacterial infection from contact with infected person.	Antibiotics	Sterility; constant pelvic pain.
PUBIC LICE Known as "crabs"	Parasites or bugs live on pubic hair and cause itching.	Small bugs passed from contact with infected person.	Medicated soaps	No permanent effects.
SYPHILIS Known as "syph"	Sores in the genital area, flu-like symptoms. <i>Disease may be active even if no visible signs are present.</i>	Bacterial infection from contact with infected person.	Antibiotics	Unless treated early may result in death, increased HIV risk; insanity; brain, heart, kidney or liver damage blindness; birth defects in fetus.