

PATIENT EDUCATION — SEXUAL HEALTH

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How to Prevent STIs / STDs

A Dignified, Evidence-Based Guide

For sexually active adults — complete, clinical, and without stigma

Over **1 million sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are acquired globally every day**. Most are treatable; many are curable. **Knowledge, regular testing, and honest communication with partners are your most powerful protection.** Seeking information or testing is not a sign of promiscuity — it is responsible healthcare. There is no stigma in protecting your health.

COMMON STIS — WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

INFECTION	PRIMARY TRANSMISSION	KEY SYMPTOMS	TREATABILITY
Chlamydia	Vaginal, anal, or oral sex	Often no symptoms; discharge, burning urination, pelvic pain in women	CURABLE — antibiotic course
Gonorrhoea	Vaginal, anal, or oral sex	Discharge, painful urination; commonly asymptomatic — especially in women	CURABLE — antibiotics (rising resistance)
Syphilis	Skin/mucous membrane contact, blood	Painless sore (chancre) → rash → late-stage organ damage if untreated	CURABLE — penicillin injection
HIV	Blood, sexual fluids, breast milk	Flu-like illness at onset; then often asymptomatic for years	MANAGEABLE — ART: undetectable = untransmittable (U=U)
Herpes (HSV-1 & 2)	Skin-to-skin contact; oral and genital	Blisters or sores; majority of carriers are asymptomatic and unaware	MANAGEABLE — antivirals reduce outbreaks and transmission risk
HPV	Skin-to-skin, sexual contact	Genital warts (some strains); most infections clear spontaneously	MANAGEABLE — vaccine prevents 9 strains; warts treatable
Hepatitis B	Blood, sexual fluids, shared needles	Jaundice, fatigue, dark urine; many carry without symptoms	MANAGEABLE — vaccine prevents; antivirals for chronic HBV

INFECTION	PRIMARY TRANSMISSION	KEY SYMPTOMS	TREATABILITY
Hepatitis C	Blood-to-blood; less commonly sexual	Often asymptomatic for decades; can cause chronic liver disease	CURABLE — DAA therapy (very high success rates)

PREVENTION — MOST EFFECTIVE METHODS

<p>Condoms — Male & Female (Internal)</p> <p>When used correctly and consistently, male (external) condoms reduce transmission risk by 80–95% for most STIs including HIV, gonorrhoea, chlamydia, and syphilis. Female (internal) condoms provide similar protection and give the receptive partner control over their own protection.</p> <p>✓ Highest effectiveness — always first choice</p>	<p>Vaccination — HPV & Hepatitis B</p> <p>HPV vaccine (Gardasil 9): Prevents 9 strains responsible for cervical cancer, penile cancer, anal cancer, and genital warts. Recommended for all genders up to age 45. Hepatitis B vaccine: 3-dose series, highly effective, available free at government health centres across India.</p> <p>✓ Permanent, lifelong protection</p>
<p>PrEP — HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis</p> <p>A daily oral medication (or injectable) that prevents HIV infection in HIV-negative individuals with 99% effectiveness when taken as prescribed. Available at ICTC (Integrated Counselling and Testing Centres) across India. Highly recommended for high-risk individuals.</p>	<p>PEP — Post-Exposure Prophylaxis</p> <p>Emergency HIV prevention medication that must be started within 72 hours of potential HIV exposure — the sooner the better. Available at government hospitals and ART centres. Do not wait — even a few hours of delay reduces effectiveness.</p>
<p>Regular STI Testing</p> <p>Testing is not a sign of promiscuity — it is responsible healthcare. Sexually active people should test annually; more frequently with multiple or new partners. Most STIs have no symptoms — testing is the only way to know your status and protect your partners.</p>	<p>Open Communication with Partners</p> <p>Discussing STI status, testing history, and contraception before sexual activity protects both partners. Disclosure of known infections is both an ethical and legal responsibility in many jurisdictions. Honest communication is itself a powerful prevention tool.</p>

Page 1 of 2. For appointments: +91 8591840141 | drpavansonar.com

Dr. Pavan Sonar — MBBS, DPM, DNB Psychiatry, MS Counselling & Psychotherapy
 Senior Consultant Psychiatrist & Sexologist | Outlook Best Doctor Mumbai 2022 · 2024 · 2026
 Bellevue Hospital, Andheri West | Siddhivinayak Hospital, Malad | Bhagat Polyclinic, Borivali

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PAGE 2 OF 2 — SYMPTOMS, TESTING, MYTHS & CONFIDENTIAL CARE

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Recognising Symptoms, Testing & Seeking Care

Warning signs, who should test, myth-busting, and confidential care with Dr. Pavan Sonar

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SEE A DOCTOR IF YOU NOTICE THESE SYMPTOMS

●
Unusual discharge — abnormal colour, odour, consistency, or quantity

😬
Burning, stinging, or pain during or after urination

😬
Sores, blisters, ulcers, or raw areas on the genitals, anus, or mouth

Skin rash — especially on palms, soles of feet, or trunk (syphilis)

Pelvic pain, lower abdominal pain, or pain during sex (women)

Flu-like illness — fever, fatigue, swollen lymph nodes — within 2-4 weeks of potential HIV exposure

REGULAR TESTING — WHO, WHEN & WHAT

Who Should Test Regularly?

- ✓ Anyone sexually active with new or multiple partners
- ✓ Individuals not consistently using condoms
- ✓ All pregnant women — routine STI panel recommended
- ✓ Anyone whose partner has tested STI-positive
- ✓ Men who have sex with men (MSM) — every 3-6 months
- ✓ People who inject drugs or share needles
- ✓ Anyone with symptoms listed above — even mild ones

Standard STI Panel Includes:

- ✓ HIV — ELISA or rapid antigen/antibody test
- ✓ Syphilis — VDRL and TPHA confirmatory test
- ✓ Hepatitis B — surface antigen (HBsAg)
- ✓ Hepatitis C — antibody screen
- ✓ Chlamydia & Gonorrhoea — urine PCR or swab
- ✓ Herpes (HSV IgG) — if clinically indicated
- ✓ Pap smear and HPV co-test for women (annual)

COMMON MYTHS — CORRECTED BY CLINICAL EVIDENCE

MYTH

"I would know if I had an STI — I'd have symptoms."

Fact: The majority of STIs including chlamydia, gonorrhoea, HPV, and HIV are completely asymptomatic for months or years. Testing is the only reliable way to know your status.

MYTH

"Only people with many partners get STIs."

Fact: A single unprotected encounter is sufficient for transmission. STI risk is determined by exposure — not relationship status, character, or number of partners. Anyone who is sexually active carries risk.

MYTH

"Oral sex is safe — no STI risk."

Fact: Herpes (HSV-1 and HSV-2), gonorrhoea, syphilis, HPV, and chlamydia can all be transmitted through oral sex. Dental dams and condoms significantly reduce — though not eliminate — this risk.



MYTH

"HIV is still a death sentence in India."

Fact: With modern antiretroviral therapy (ART), HIV-positive individuals live full, normal lifespans. An undetectable viral load means zero transmission risk to sexual partners — the U=U (Undetectable = Untransmittable) principle is scientifically established.

Your Consultation is Strictly Confidential — Without Judgement

All discussions about sexual health with Dr. Pavan Sonar are completely private. You will never be shamed, judged, or lectured for seeking information or care. Sexual health is medical health — there is no difference. Please do not delay testing or treatment out of embarrassment or stigma. Early treatment protects both you and your partner, prevents complications, and in many cases leads to complete cure. A confidential appointment is one call away.

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Disclaimer: This guide is for educational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. All STI testing and treatment should be conducted with a qualified healthcare provider. For confidential appointments with Dr. Pavan Sonar: **+91 8591840141** | drpavansonar.com

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