

Activity: 7-8.14.1

Key Message

- Whilst there are some specific symptoms of STIs, many STIs have little or no symptoms.
- It is important to get tested for STIs after any unprotected sex.
- Always using a condom is the most effective way of helping to prevent transmission of STIs.

Activity Details

Victorian Curriculum

Health & PE Investigate and select strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing VCHPEP126

Time 20 minutes

Levels 7 & 8

Equipment

- a glove
- *STI information* Teacher reference sheet

Handshake activity

Purpose

To highlight and reinforce basic information about Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs) and their transmission.

Teaching notes

This activity usually causes a lot of excitement and giggling, especially when the students realise the significance of shaking hands. It can be varied in a number of ways; by increasing or decreasing the number of 'sexual partners', by giving detailed information about the STIs or simply by naming them. Students will often be quick to point out the flaw in the activity; they may not contract an STI if they shook hands with a person before they became infected. Regardless, it is an effective activity to highlight the risks and ease with which STIs could be transmitted.

Procedure

1. Give a latex glove to one student and ask her/him to put it on.
2. Ask all students to stand up, move around the room and shake hands with three people, remembering who these people are.
3. Introduce the idea that shaking hands in this activity equates to having sex with that person.
4. Choose an STI (e.g. Chlamydia) and tell one student that they have this infection. Ask that student and anyone who shook their hand to sit, as they, too, will have contracted that STI. Then ask those who shook hands with any person sitting to also sit.
5. Repeat the process for another two or three STIs, one at a time.
6. By this stage, almost all students in the class would have contracted at least one STI, except for the person wearing a glove, which represents a condom.
7. Discuss the ease at which these diseases can spread, the need for an STI checkup in the case of unprotected sex (as most STIs are asymptomatic) and other ways STIs can spread. For example, oral sex, anal sex or ejaculating on broken skin.
8. Discuss how, as a teacher, you didn't shake any hands. Tell students that this is the same as not having sex, (abstinence), for this activity.
9. Discuss how abstinence protects against contracting an STI.
10. Provide information about local sexual health clinics, especially those that are youth-friendly.

STI information: teacher reference sheet

Name:	Herpes Simplex Virus-HSV
What is it?	Virus
Symptoms:	Often no symptoms. Tingling, itchy pimples or blisters. Can reoccur at times of stress
How to test:	Blood test
Treatment:	Anti-herpetic medication, to manage it. No drug to cure it

Name:	Human Papilloma Virus-HPV
What is it?	Virus
Symptoms:	Can cause warts, though can carry virus without presenting with warts. 200 types of HPV (2 are associated with 80% of cervical cancer in Australia)
How to test:	Clinical diagnosis Pap smear for cervical changes associated with cervical cancer. This is not an STI check
Treatment:	Remove warts

Name:	HIV
What is it?	Virus which attacks the immune system
Symptoms:	Shortly after infection, flu-like symptoms may occur, though many have no symptoms for years
How to test:	Blood test
Treatment:	Treatments are available to improve the length and quality of life

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STI information: teacher reference sheet

Name:	Chlamydia
What is it?	Bacteria which lives in urethra, cervix, rectum and throat
Symptoms:	Women: 70-90% show no symptoms Men: 50% show no symptoms
How to test:	Urine Sample
Treatment:	Antibiotics

Name:	Gonorrhoea
What is it?	Bacteria
Symptoms:	Can be carried in throat and rectum with no symptoms
How to test:	Urine Sample
Treatment:	Antibiotics

Name:	Syphilis
What is it?	Bacteria
Symptoms:	Not always symptomatic
How to test:	Blood test
Treatment:	Antibiotics

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