

# Planning and Protection: Avoiding or Managing STIs

*A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum*

*Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.*

## **NSES ALIGNMENT:**

Students will be able to:

**SH.12.GS.1** – Develop a plan to eliminate or reduce risk for STDs, including HIV.

**SH.12.AI.1** – Explain how to access local STD and HIV testing and treatment services.

**TARGET GRADE:** High School  
– Lesson 4

**TIME:** 50 Minutes

## **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- White board and markers
- Lined 3 x 5 index cards (one per student)
- **Homework:** “STI/HIV Investigative Reporting!” (one per student)
- “Information for Teens and Young Adults: Staying Healthy and Preventing STDs” handout - one per student

## **ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON:**

- Turn the index cards to the non-lined side.
- In the bottom right-hand corner, write lightly and in pencil:
  - “S” on 3 cards.
  - “U”, “A”, “C” and “P” on at least 4 cards each.
  - You should have a total of at least 19 cards: 3 “S” cards and at least 16 cards with the other letters.
- Leave the remaining cards blank.

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Name the only 100% effective way of avoiding an STI and HIV. [Knowledge]
2. Explain why having oral, anal, or vaginal sex with an infected partner puts a person or couple at risk for STIs and HIV. [Knowledge]
3. Name one health clinic or center in their area that provides HIV testing and STI testing and treatment for teens. [Knowledge]

## **A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:**

Language is really important and we’ve intentionally been very careful about our language throughout this curriculum. You may notice language throughout the curriculum that seems less familiar —using the pronoun “they” instead of “her” or “him,” using gender neutral names in scenarios and role-plays and referring to “someone with a vulva” vs. a girl or woman. This is intended to make the curriculum inclusive of all genders and gender identities. You will need to determine for yourself how much and how often you can do this in your own school and classroom and should make adjustments accordingly.

## **PROCEDURE:**

**STEP 1:** Ask the students the terms “STI” and “HIV” mean. As they respond, write on the white board: “STI = Sexually Transmitted Infection” and “HIV = Human Immunodeficiency Virus.” Remind the students that “STI” and “STD” (sexually transmitted disease) are the same terms that refer to same group of bacteria, viruses, and other organisms that can be passed from one infected person to another during sexual contact. Also remind them that HIV is the virus that can lead to the medical condition called AIDS.

## Planning and Protection: Avoiding or Managing STIs

*A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect,  
Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum*

Ask the students to take out a pen or pencil and distribute one of the index cards you prepared in advance of the class to each student without telling them there is anything written on them.

Once they all have a card and writing tool, ask them to stand up and walk around the room, just milling around, talking and saying “hi” to each other. After about 10 seconds, ask them to stop where they are and pair up with the person standing closest to them.

*Note to the Teacher: If there is an odd number of students, the leftover person can join a pair as a group of three; however, you do not want there to be groups of three throughout the room, so be sure to wait until everyone has paired up before assigning the one leftover student to a pair.*

Say, **“I am going to give you a topic to discuss with this other person. You will have two minutes, and you need to keep the discussion going for that time.”** Write on the board: “Top Three Favorite Movies.” Say, **“I’d like you to talk with each other about three of your favorite movies and why they’re your favorites. It doesn’t matter who starts first; I’ll tell you when two minutes have elapsed. Go!”**

After two minutes, ask them to stop their conversations. Say, **“Please hand your index card with the lined side up to your partner, and take their index card from them. Write your name on the card, and then give it back to your partner. So you should now be holding your index card that has the other person’s name on it.”**

Ask them to thank their partner for their conversation and then start milling around the room again, greeting each other, smiling, whatever they wish—and then ask them to stop again and partner up with whomever is closest.

Say, “I’m going to ask you to have another brief conversation with this person but on a different topic.” Write on the board: “Travel Anywhere.” Say, **“If money were no option, and you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be and why? Remember, you have about 2 minutes so you can choose more than one place if you wish. Ok, go!”**

After 2 minutes, ask them to stop their conversations and sign their partner’s card. Be sure that once they have signed their partner’s card they get their original card back but now with the names of the last two students with whom they had conversations.

Ask them to thank their partner for their conversation and then start milling around the room one last time, greeting each other, smiling, giving high fives, whatever they wish—and then ask them to stop again and partner up with whomever is closest.

Say, **“I’m going to ask you to have one more brief conversation with this person but on a different topic.”** Write on the board: “Super Powers.” Say, **“If you could have any three super powers, what would they be, and why? Remember, you have about 2 minutes. Ok, go!”**

After 2 minutes, ask them to stop their conversations and sign their partner’s card. Be sure that once they have signed their partner’s card they get their original card back. They should now have an index card with the names of all three students with whom they had conversations. Ask them to take their seats. (7 minutes)

## Planning and Protection: Avoiding or Managing STIs

A Lesson Plan from *Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum*

**STEP 2:** Explain to the students that, for the purposes of this activity ONLY, the conversations they just had weren't just conversations—but rather they were sexual encounters. Tell everyone to turn their card over to the unlined side.

Say, “**In one of the corners, most of you should see a lightly written letter. If you have an ‘S’ on your card, can you please stand up.**”

*Note to the Teacher: It can help to intentionally select the students who will receive the ‘S’ card to ensure they won’t be easily embarrassed or mistakenly believe they were singled out due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.*

Three students should stand up. Explain that for the purposes of this activity ONLY, this person has a sexually transmitted infection. Even though they look and feel fine, they had no idea they had an STI.

*Note to the Teacher: There will very likely be some class reaction as you announce that these represented sexual encounters and when you announce who represents the STIs. This is a good thing! It brings energy to the room and keeps students engaged. Be mindful, however, that we do not know the STI status of our students, and you want to be sure people don’t throw out insults, such as, “Figures it’d be [student name]” or anything else. This is why it is important to emphasize again and again throughout the activity, “for the purposes of this activity only.” Be sure to refer back to your ground rules as necessary to make sure students are respectful of each other.*

Ask the rest of the students to look at their own cards to see whether they have the signatures of any of the people standing on their card—and if they do, to please stand. Then ask whether the people who are standing have any of the following letters on their card. If so, explain what they should do next:

- “**Of those who are standing, if you have an ‘A’ on your card, you may sit down. An ‘A’ means you chose to remain abstinent—you did no-risk sexual things together or didn’t do anything sexual together at all. Therefore you did a great job—in fact the best job—of protecting yourself against STIs or HIV.**”
- “**If you have a ‘C’ on your card, you may also sit down. A ‘C’ means you had sexual contact (meaning vaginal, oral, or anal sex or genital-to-genital contact) and used condoms or other latex barriers, so you were at very low risk for STIs, HIV (or pregnancy if you were with a partner of a different sex).**”
- “**If you have a ‘P’ on your card, it means that if one person in the relationship can get pregnant or has another reason to take the pill, they’re on the pill—but that’s the only method you used. So, great job protecting yourself and your partner against pregnancy if that was a risk, but the pill offers NO protection against STIs or HIV—so you have to remain standing.**”
- “**If you have a ‘U’ on your card, it means you did not use any condoms or other latex barriers during your sexual encounter—meaning the sex was ‘unprotected’ and very risky for STI, HIV, or possibly pregnancy—so you have to remain standing.**”

## Planning and Protection: Avoiding or Managing STIs

*A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum*

- **“If you have a blank index card, it means you were using alcohol or drugs during the encounter and can’t remember what happened, including whether you used any kind of latex barrier—so you need to remain standing as well.”**  
(12 minutes)

**STEP 3:** Ask the students to look around the room and to tell you how many people are currently standing up. Once they tell you the number, ask, **“How many were standing the very first time—how many had an ‘S’ on their cards?”** Probe for “3” and say, **“So three people originally had an STI, and then by the end of the activity, [fill in the number of students standing] had some kind of unprotected sex with that person.”**

Ask everyone to take their seats. Process, by asking the following questions:

- **What was it like to do that activity? What was** [easy, fun, hard, interesting – fill in their responses] about it?
- **What did you notice about who got to sit down, and who had to remain standing?** Probe for the fact that only students who had an “A” on their card for abstinence or used latex barriers could sit down. Ask them why they think that was. Probe for the fact that only abstinence offers 100% effective protection against STIs, but that condoms and other latex barriers offer extremely effective protection if they’re used correctly with every single sexual encounter.
- **What does the number of people who were standing at the end of the activity tell you?** Probe for:
  - How it’s best to not have unprotected sex with multiple partners to reduce the chances of spreading STIs or HIV.
  - How, if you’re going to have any kind of sex, it’s important to use condoms or other barriers correctly and every time.
  - How important it is to talk with a person about their sexual history to figure out what your own risk for STIs or HIV is.
  - How if a person were to find out they had some kind of sex with someone who has an STI or HIV they would need to get tested and tell anyone else they may have been in a sexual relationship with that they need to get tested too.

As people participate in the activity processing, write the five themes that should come up during the discussion on the board; if any of them do not, add them in at the end, saying, **“I also saw from this activity that ... ”**

- 1. Abstinence** is the safest and only 100% effective choice for eliminating STI risk.
- 2. Condoms**, other latex barriers and getting the vaccines for HPV and Hepatitis B are a must for reducing STI and HIV risk.
- 3. Talking with your partner** is key before having any kind of sex.
- 4. Contraceptive methods** like the pill are great for pregnancy prevention, but they don’t protect against STIs or HIV.
- 5. Get tested** for STIs and HIV if you are having sex, and ask your partner(s) to get tested, too. Some couples will go to get tested together, which reinforces the care they have for each other.

## Planning and Protection: Avoiding or Managing STIs

*A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum*

Remind the students that someone needs to have an STI in order to transmit it to someone else and that sexual behaviors do not in and of themselves create STIs. Also remind them that this was only an activity, and that nothing about what you just did implies that the students who were standing up during the activity have an infection or actually had sexual encounters with each other! (9 minutes)

**STEP 4:** Divide the class into five groups. Once they are in their groups, say, “**It’s great to recognize that these five points are important—but it’s another thing altogether to remember them or put them into practice. When businesses want us to change our behaviors or buy certain things or act in certain ways, they buy time on TV or on websites and create commercials. That’s what you’re going to do now.**”

Assign each group one of the five categories that you wrote on the board. Tell them they will have 10 minutes to work together to create a commercial, jingle, slogan, or logo for that statement or something that has to do with that statement, which they will then act out for or present to the class. Remind them that commercials tend to be no longer than 30–45 seconds. If a full commercial will take too long to create in the time allotted, the students may create a jingle, slogan, or logo for their statement. As groups work, walk around the room to help them get started or point them in the right direction. You will also want to listen for any joking around or inappropriate language and help refocus the students on the activity. (12 minutes)

**STEP 5:** After about 10 minutes, ask the groups to stop. Have each group present its commercial or the jingle/slogan/logo, asking for feedback from the class after each: What did you take away from this commercial? Was anything inaccurate? What was missing? What would be some other helpful take-away points? (8 minutes)

**STEP 6:** Acknowledge the work of the class. Say, “STIs are a very real part of our world today. And considering 1 in 4 teens will end up with an STI once they start having some kind of sex, teens—and people of all ages—have a responsibility to know how to practice ways to reduce their chances of getting an STI.”

Explain and distribute the “*STI/HIV Investigative Reporting!*” homework sheet, “Information for Teens and Young Adults” handout and close the class session. (2 minutes)

### RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

Learning Objectives 1 and 2 will be achieved by the STI index card activity in class. The homework assignment will fulfill Learning Objective 3.

### HOMEWORK:

“*STI/HIV Investigative Reporting!*” homework sheet, in which students will go around for the next week interviewing people about what they know and think about safer sex, as well as finding information about where someone in their community can go for STI and HIV testing and treatment. There are some Internet resources necessary for this assignment; if students do not have access to the Internet at home, please print the “*Information for Teens and Young Adults: Staying Healthy and Preventing STDs*” handout from the CDC.

Note: Versions of the STI index card activity has been used in a variety of formats and resources for many years. The original author is unknown.

## STI/HIV Investigative Reporting!

### Homework (HS-4)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** You are a reporter working on a story about STI and HIV prevention. You need to talk directly with some people as well as go online to do some research to get the information required by your editor. Be sure to protect the confidentiality of your sources — this tends to encourage them to be more honest!

1. **Check out these teens as they interview students about this same topic and write down some myths about STIs!** [www.youtube.com/watch?v=zP3y6yTbcio](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zP3y6yTbcio)

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2. **What do high schoolers know about STD prevention?** Find five students and ask them to answer the following two questions (Be sure not to give them the answers—you're trying to find out what people know without you saying anything!):

**Question 1: Do you think people our age are at risk for STDs? Why or why not?**

PERSON'S GRADE LEVEL	PERSON'S INITIALS	PERSON'S ANSWER
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

## STI/HIV Investigative Reporting!

**Question 2: What is the BEST way to avoid getting an STI or HIV, or giving either of these to someone else?**

PERSON'S GRADE LEVEL	PERSON'S INITIALS	PERSON'S ANSWER
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

**3. Ask a parent or trusted adult the following questions about STIs and HIV:**

What are some STIs that you've heard of? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you know how HIV and AIDS are related to each other? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the only way to 100% effective way to avoid contracting an STI? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If people decide to have sex, what can they do to reduce the risk of transmitting STIs or HIV?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Explore this website together (or read the handout if you received one) to check their answers!**

[www.cdc.gov/std/life-stages-populations/stdfact-teens.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/std/life-stages-populations/stdfact-teens.htm)

# Information for Teens and Young Adults: Staying Healthy and Preventing STDs



*If you choose to have sex, know how to protect yourself against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).*



## What are sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)?

STDs are diseases that are passed from one person to another through sexual contact. These include chlamydia, gonorrhea, genital herpes, human papillomavirus (HPV), syphilis, and HIV. Many of these STDs do not show symptoms for a long time, but they can still be harmful and passed on during sex.

## How are STDs spread?

You can get an STD by having sex (vaginal, anal or oral) with someone who has an STD. Anyone who is sexually active can get an STD. You don't even have to "go all the way" (have anal or vaginal sex) to get an STD, since some STDs, like herpes and HPV, are spread by skin-to-skin contact.

## How common are STDs?

STDs are common, especially among young people. There are about 20 million new cases of STDs each year in the United States, and about half of these are in people between the ages of 15 and 24. Young people are at greater risk of getting an STD for several reasons:

- Young women's bodies are biologically more susceptible to STDs.
- Some young people do not get the recommended STD tests.
- Many young people are hesitant to talk openly and honestly with a doctor or nurse about their sex lives.
- Not having insurance or transportation can make it more difficult for young people to access STD testing.
- Some young people have more than one sex partner.

## What can I do to protect myself?

- The surest way to protect yourself against STDs is to not have sex. That means not having any vaginal, anal, or oral sex ("abstinence"). There are many things to consider before having sex, and it's okay to say "no" if you don't want to have sex.
- If you do decide to have sex, you and your partner should get tested beforehand and make sure that you and your partner use a condom—every time you have oral, anal, or vaginal sex, from start to finish. Know where to get condoms and how to use them correctly. It is not safe to stop using condoms unless you've both been tested, know your status, and are in a mutually monogamous relationship.
- Mutual monogamy means that you and your partner both agree to only have sexual contact with each other. This can help protect against STDs, as long as you've both been tested and know you're STD-free.
- Before you have sex, talk with your partner about how you will prevent STDs and pregnancy. If you think you're ready to have sex, you need to be ready to protect your body and your future. You should also talk to your partner ahead of time about what you will and will not do sexually. Your partner should always respect your right to say no to anything that doesn't feel right.

- Make sure you get the health care you need. Ask a doctor or nurse about STD testing and about vaccines against HPV and hepatitis B.
- Girls and young women may have extra needs to protect their reproductive health. Talk to your doctor or nurse about regular cervical cancer screening and chlamydia testing. You may also want to discuss unintended pregnancy and birth control.
- Avoid using alcohol and drugs. If you use alcohol and drugs, you are more likely to take risks, like not using a condom or having sex with someone you normally wouldn't have sex with.

### **If I get an STD, how will I know?**

Many STDs don't cause any symptoms that you would notice, so the only way to know for sure if you have an STD is to get tested. You can get an STD from having sex with someone who has no symptoms. Just like you, that person might not even know he or she has an STD.

### **Where can I get tested?**

There are places that offer teen-friendly, confidential, and free STD tests. This means that no one has to find out you've been tested. Visit [FindSTDTest.org](http://FindSTDTest.org) to find an STD testing location near you.

### **Can STDs be treated?**

Your doctor can prescribe medicines to cure some STDs, like chlamydia and gonorrhea. Other STDs, like herpes, can't be cured, but you can take medicine to help with the symptoms.

If you are ever treated for an STD, be sure to finish all of your medicine, even if you feel better before you finish it all. Ask the doctor or nurse about testing and treatment for your partner, too. You and your partner should avoid having sex until you've both been treated. Otherwise, you may continue to pass the STD back and forth. It is possible to get an STD again (after you've been treated), if you have sex with someone who has an STD.

### **What happens if I don't treat an STD?**

Some curable STDs can be dangerous if they aren't treated. For example, if left untreated, chlamydia and gonorrhea can make it difficult—or even impossible—for a woman to get pregnant. You also increase your chances of getting HIV if you have an untreated STD. Some STDs, like HIV, can be fatal if left untreated.

### **What if my partner or I have an incurable STD?**

Some STDs—like herpes and HIV—aren't curable, but a doctor can prescribe medicine to treat the symptoms.

If you are living with an STD, it's important to tell your partner before you have sex. Although it may be uncomfortable to talk about your STD, open and honest conversation can help your partner make informed decisions to protect his or her health.

### **If I have questions, who can answer them?**

If you have questions, talk to a parent or other trusted adult. Don't be afraid to be open and honest with them about your concerns. If you're ever confused or need advice, they're the first place to start. Remember, they were young once, too.

Talking about sex with a parent or another adult doesn't need to be a one-time conversation. It's best to leave the door open for conversations in the future.

It's also important to talk honestly with a doctor or nurse. Ask which STD tests and vaccines they recommend for you.

### **Where can I get more information?**

CDC  
How You Can Prevent Sexually Transmitted Diseases  
<http://www.cdc.gov/std/prevention/>

Teen Pregnancy  
<http://www.cdc.gov/TeenPregnancy/Teens.html>

CDC-INFO Contact Center  
1-800-CDC-INFO  
(1-800-232-4636)  
Contact <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/dcs/RequestForm.aspx>

HealthFinder.gov  
STD Testing: Conversation Starters  
<http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/health-conditions-and-diseases/hiv-and-other-stds/std-testing-conversation-starters>

American Sexual Health Association  
Sexual Health and You  
<http://www.iwannaknow.org/teens/index.html>

Teens and Young Adults  
<http://www.ashasexualhealth.org/sexual-health/teens-and-young-adults/>

References  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Incidence, Prevalence, and Cost of Sexually Transmitted Infections in the United States, <http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats/sti-estimates-fact-sheet-feb-2013.pdf>. Accessed October 14, 2014.