

MYTHS OF STIs

As the following statements are read, have the students write True or False on their papers:

1. Most people with an STI experience painful symptoms.

(False. Many people who are infected with an STI, men and women alike, do not notice any symptoms until they visit their doctor or suffer from infertility. Sores do not have to be painful to be a problem.)

2. Birth control pills prevent the spread of STIs.

(False. Birth control pills prevent pregnancy, but do not offer protection from sexually transmitted diseases or infections. They may change the pH in the vagina and make the woman more susceptible to gonorrhea.)

3. Douching will cure an STI.

(False. Douching, or washing the vagina out, may only spread an infection from the vagina into the uterus. Unless specially prescribed by a doctor, douching will not cure an STI.)

4. Abstinence is the best way to prevent STIs.

(True. Abstinence from sexual intercourse is the most effective way to avoid becoming exposed to a sexually transmitted disease. However, some genital tract infections can be spread through oral sex and close body-to-body contact.)

5. If you get an STI once, and are treated, you can't get it again.

(False. Even if a person has been treated with antibiotics, he/she can be reinfected if she/he has sexual contact with someone who carries the disease.)

6. A person does not need to see a doctor if she/he notices sores on his/her genitals once, but then they go away.

(False. Even if symptoms go away after a week or so, a person still needs to see a doctor. Just because the symptoms have abated, doesn't mean the disease has disappeared.)

7. Condoms help prevent the spread of STIs.

(True. Although condoms are not 100% effective in preventing exposure to STIs, they are much better than nothing. They prevent direct skin-to-skin contact. Genital areas not covered by the condom may still be infected.