

Potentially serious STDs prevalent on social scene



By Dawnelle Scalf

Dear Diary: Remember the party a few weekends ago? It was great! It was a Saint Patrick's Day party so we were all looking to get lucky. Well, I saw Todd (my ex) there, so of course we ended up talking, drinking and spending the night together. This morning I asked him if he had "been with" anyone else since we broke up. He said yes! We didn't use a condom and so I went to the Health Center to be tested. The results came back and the doctor asked me to meet with her. She told me I may have chlamydia. Not me!

Only dirty people who sleep around get STDs, but not college students like me. That was my first reaction. But after expressing these concerns to the doctor I understood that yes, this was serious...but also curable and it happens more often than I expected. After taking the tests that confirmed I had the disease I was prescribed antibiotics. After that I read up on chlamydia to better understand it. I knew Todd would have many questions. All I can say is he was shocked and I was a little embarrassed, but it was all resolved and he was going to be tested, too. I think I handled this the best way possible, the doctor says soon all signs of the disease will be gone. Thank goodness we caught it early enough...

Close to 12 million Americans have a Sexually Transmitted Disease. An STD is any disease acquired primarily through sexual contact. Organisms like bacteria, viruses, tiny insects and parasites transmit STDs and usually outside the body these parasites die. Getting a disease from a toilet seat, doorknob, or other object is very, very unlikely and rarely happens.

Anyone can get an STD, but people between the ages of 15-24 who are sexually active with different partners and live in an urban setting are more likely to get infected.

Two STDs that are becoming more common are chlamydia and human papillomavirus (H.P.V.). Painful urination, unusual vaginal bleeding, low abdominal pain and increased discharge are the most common symptoms of chlamydia, although 4 out of 5 women have no symptoms. Often a result of having chlamydia is PID (pelvic inflammatory disease) which is inflammation of the cervix. This is a very serious condition, difficult to detect and often results in infertility or ectopic or tubal pregnancies. For men, chlamydia can also cause sterility.

H.P.V. is a virus that causes genital warts, lesions, or infections. It is quickly becoming one of the most common STDs and may be the cause of cervical cancer. The warts, which are small, painless, hard spots, are very contagious and appear three weeks to eight months after exposure. They appear on the vulva, labia, bottom or inside of the vagina, cervix, anus or the head of the penis. As they get worse, they get larger and look similar to cauliflower.

Prevention of STDs is possible and relatively easy if you are willing to take the responsibility. There are six simple options you can choose to help keep from being infected:

- 1) Abstinence
- 2) Condoms (includes female condom)
- 3) Vaginal spermicides
- 4) Diaphragms (preferably with spermicide)
- 5) Washing genitals thoroughly before and after sex

6) Knowing your partner and his/her sexual history. There is treatment for warts and chlamydia if detected early (usually drugs or antibiotics are prescribed), so regular check-ups for men, and pap smears for women are important. Often tests for specific diseases (like chlamydia in this case) have to be asked for. So, it is important to be safe and request one if there is any question of infection. Sexual partners should also be treated and follow-up check-ups are imperative to successfully get rid of H.P.V. and chlamydia.

Abstinence best protection



By Michelle Hanley

Abstinence is abstaining from food, drink or other pleasures - in this case, sexual intercourse. For many of us sex proves that we are adequate, alive, beautiful and that we can feel and be loved.

Many people long to feel sexually desirable. Desire brings reassurance to the desired. And because of this feeling of being needed by someone else, we feel valued.

Reassurance is especially important for women. Society gives women a very limited range of ways in which they can gain self-esteem and worth. If a woman does not engage in sexual activity, she is considered to be a prude, a man-hater, a spinster, a fuss-pot, an old maid.

We live in a sex-oriented society. Our society imposes on young people great pressure to have sex. Our society embraces massive love-making through experience, leisure, sexual advertising, sensual movies and entertainment. A well-known brand name, Guess, feeds viewers two seductive female role models and one sexy male role model in their television advertisements. All of the models have very hard, hot and sweaty young bodies in tight clothing. They are playfully performing a menage a trois to advertise their ever-so-popular blue-jeans. Denim and sex. That's interesting!

The adolescent years bring hormones, new experience and peer pressure. For each gender the sexual role that "must" be filled is a difficult balance to gain and maintain. We must keep our masculinity or femininity afloat, while coping with the expectations of society and even of the partner we choose.

There is not only pressure to have sex, but to have lots of the best sex possible and to prove that we are sexually successful. A deodorant commercial shows a woman how she can carefully keep up in her career and sex life—even without perspiration!

Regardless of what the media and society promote, we must now learn to accept that it is perfectly possible for us to live a whole, satisfying and creative life with love, but without sex. Why? Because education and abstinence are the only cure we have for AIDS. We must consider and practice these options to stop the spread of the disease.

The choice to abstain from intercourse may be a vol-

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Regulations await signature



By Tabitha Keener

As students wear fewer clothes with the warmer spring climate, it becomes more obvious that the old tabooed tattoo isn't so taboo anymore. For a long time, tattoos were associated mainly with stereotypes of bikers and prison inmates. Now, as grunge bands, Doctor Martens, Birkenstocks, and "change" have become mainstream, tattoos have become increasingly popular.

Reasons for getting a tattoo are as varied as the number of designs possible. One person sets himself apart from the crowd by getting a large, crazed gargoyle brandishing a chainsaw across his chest. Another person gets her Greek affiliation tattooed on her ankle and sets herself within a crowd.

If you are considering becoming as decorated as Henry Rollins, or if you just want to get a cute little peace sign on your arm, you should know the following facts about the possible risks of tattooing.

Presently, Oregon has no laws regarding tattooing. But Bill 2569, which the state congress has already approved, awaits the governor's signature. This new law will require permanent color technicians, tattoo artists and electrologists to be licensed and will also regulate the sterilization of tattooing instruments, tattooist training hygiene standards for tattoo studios and the acceptance of clients who are clearly intoxicated. Professional tattooists do change the needles now, but they do not always sterilize the tattooing device which is exposed to blood.

It is possible for you to go out to a party and come back with Ronald Reagan tattooed on your forehead. Who knows what will sound good after having a bottle of Jose Cuervo. None of the tattoo studios that I talked to said that they would accept a drunk client, but that is on their own accord. Legally, if you go into a tattoo studio and plop your money down, you will get what you asked for, regardless of whether you're drunk or sober.

Tattoo inks have never received Federal Food and Drug Administration approval. Inks are known to be absorbed into the lymph nodes, but long term consequences have yet to be determined. Red ink causes the most sensitivity problems with clients because it contains mercury, which is a nerve poison.

The known possible health risks in acquiring a tattoo include Hepatitis B, tuberculosis, infection and allergic reaction. There is also a possibility of HIV transmission when tattoo needles are reused, just the same as when IV drug users share needles. You should be aware of these risks, especially when dealing with amateur tattooists. Make sure the tattoo needle is never reused.

There are a few main issues to recall if you do decide on getting a tattoo. First, remember that it is basically permanent (there are good removal techniques, but they are not cheap) and will be with you as your body surrenders to gravity, wrinkling or puckering. Tattoos do not retain their elasticity as you age. Second, make sure the tattooist changes the needles, sterilizes the equipment and has a clean studio.

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Remember, this person is going to stick a needle into your body.



HEALTH

this same mission, with reproductive issues being the most common.

At the Eugene branch, there are two specific areas of care: the clinical and the educational. The clinical specializes in reproductive and sexually transmitted disease (STD) issues.

The clinic at Planned Parenthood offers pelvic exams, pap smears, pregnancy and unbiased counseling, STD testing and various birth control methods. There are no abortion services or HIV testing; however, referrals are given for both.

The educational program is a very

high priority in Eugene. Human Sexuality Education is definitely making a difference in the county. From 1979 through 1991, teen pregnancies declined 41 percent from 1,090 to 647, and abortion rates declined 63 percent from 571 to 214 in this same age group.

The future of Planned Parenthood in Eugene depends greatly on the Health Care Reformation and funding. They will definitely stay very involved in choice and reproductive rights and are very committed to education.

Services of Planned Parenthood vary for each clinic depending on their fund-

ing. In Eugene, for instance, services for men are limited to selling condoms and administering treatment for STDs.

Planned Parenthood outreach programs and services use volunteers to help set up and run programs. There are student volunteers who work for credit, and general volunteers who just do basic clerical work to help run the office. Volunteers are always welcome.

If you are interested in doing volunteer work you can contact Mary Widoff, Educational Director, at 344-9411 and let her know what you wish to gain or learn by helping.

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Workshops: Helpful information for a healthy lifestyle

Women and Our Health Issues

Three consecutive Thursdays, 5:30-6:30pm, Medical Library, April 29th - May 13th

Vegetarian Eating

Three consecutive Thursdays, 2:00-3:00pm, Medical Library, April 22nd - May 6th

Weight Management

Seven consecutive Wednesdays, 2:00-3:30pm, Medical Library, April 14th - May 26th

Smoking Cessation

Four consecutive Tuesdays, 3:30-4:30pm, Medical Library, April 20th - May 11th

Walking Workshop

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 12:00-12:45pm, in front of Student Health Center, ongoing

Call the Health Education Center to pre-register for workshops at 346-4441 or 346-4456.



The Women's Health Clinic

at the U of O Student Health Center

Need someone to talk to about your Health Concerns? We care about you. The Women's Health Clinic is tailored to Women's Health needs and issues. Our services include:

- Exams for STDs
- Birth Control
- Pap Smears
- Personalized Counseling & Advice
- Pregnancy Concerns
- Male and female providers



Call or come by to make an appointment
346-4449