



STI

I can't get an STI from oral sex

False. Although the risk of getting an STI through oral sex is generally less than from vaginal or anal sex, there is still a risk. The infections most commonly passed on through oral sex are herpes simplex, gonorrhoea and syphilis.

I can get herpes from a toilet seat

False. Herpes simplex virus (HSV) is spread by direct contact of mucous membranes (the soft tissue located at your genitals and mouth) with a herpes sore, saliva, or genital secretions of a person with a herpes infection. Transmission of herpes usually occurs during kissing, or oral, anal, or vaginal sex.

Getting an STI test is painful and embarrassing

False. Many STI tests are as quick and easy as giving a urine sample. Some tests might also involve having blood taken, a visual examination to look for signs of infection, or using a swab (like a smaller, soft and rounded cotton bud) on the genital area. If a swab is needed, some services will offer you the option of using it yourself. Health professionals carry out sexual health check-ups every day – and they don't look at an STI test as a reflection on your behaviour, but as a responsible health choice.

The pill can protect you from contracting STIs

False. The contraceptive pill is effective against preventing pregnancy. It is not effective against protecting against STIs. People with many sexual partners have STIs. STIs do not discriminate against the number of partners a person may have. Anyone can get a STI, it doesn't matter if you have one partner or multiple. STIs can be passed through unprotected sex.

STIs will go away on their own

False. It is unlikely that an STI will go away by itself. Getting tested is the first step in seeking treatment for an STI. Delaying treatment could lead to unintended long-term consequences.