

Draft 4 – FINAL DRAFT
June 16, 2009

ECHO Questions and Answers

10 Minute Conversation “STD Prevention and Treatment”

GUEST: Please modify question #2 for your culture.

HOST: Today we’re talking about sexually transmitted diseases. This is a sensitive subject, and our intention in talking about it is to inform, educate and to help keep people safe and healthy. You may want to ask young children to leave the room.

1. What is an STD?

Sample Answer:

- STD stands for Sexually Transmitted Disease.
- STDs are caused by bacteria, viruses and parasites.
- STDs are transmitted from an infected person to another during intimate contact.
- Some STDs can also be spread through sharing needles and syringes.
- There are other names for STDs, like STI or VD.

2. How common are STDs?

Sample Answer:

- Very common.
- One in two sexually active persons will contract an STD before the age of 25.
- Approximately 1.5 million diagnoses reported in the US each year.
- Over half of these – about 10 million – are people between 15 and 24 years of age.
- One in four sexually active young women test positive for common STDs.

3. How frequently should you get tested?

Sample answer:

- Each time you begin or end an intimate relationship.
- Even if you have a long-term partner, get tested once a year.
- If you have an STD, testing will depend on the disease. Ask a physician.

4. In my culture, talking about STDs is taboo. Why is this? And why is it so important to talk about?

Sample Answer:

- STDs are uncomfortable to talk about in our culture because _____.
- Talking and knowing about STDs can help prevent and treat them.
- Everyone should know how to keep themselves and their partners safe.
- It's important to make this subject less taboo. Talking openly will help people learn how to stay safe.
- There are common misconceptions about STDs. Here are the true facts:
 - STDs are common in both urban and rural areas.
 - Having an STD increases your chance of getting HIV/AIDS.
 - There ARE ways for youth to get affordable confidential STD tests.
 - *Many STDs have no signs or symptoms.*

5. Statistics show that half of sexually active persons will have an STD before they're 25. Why is this? How can we protect youth from getting STDs?

Sample Answer:

- **YOUTH GUEST:** Youth often haven't learned about the risks yet.
- It can feel uncomfortable to talk to adults about STDs.
- Friends may have incorrect information.
- Youth should remember it's okay to talk to trusted adults, like school nurses.
- **OTHER GUEST:** Adults should know how important it is to educate your kids.
- Help make youth feel comfortable discussing sexual health.
- There are educational resources for adults, too.

6. What are some examples of common STDs?

Sample Answer:

- Chlamydia and gonorrhea may cause itching or burning during urination, abnormal discharge, and genital discomfort.
- Herpes may cause sores on the mouth, penis and vagina.
- HPV may cause warts to grow on the genital areas.
- Some types of HPV may lead to cervical cancer.
- Ask your doctor about the HPV vaccine.
- Trichomonosis and Bacterial Vaginosis are also common STDs.
- HIV is an STD that can be deadly.

7. How can I keep from getting an STD?

Sample Answer:

- Avoid sexual contact.
- Avoid intoxicants like alcohol and drugs, or anything that can impair your judgment.
- Practice safer sex:
 - Use latex condoms during vaginal or anal intercourse.
 - Use a dental dam or latex condom cut in half during oral sex.
 - Don't share needles.
 - Using condoms help protect from STDs, but other types of birth control, like the pill, do not protect from STDs.
- Safer sex reduces your risk, but isn't 100% safe.
- Talk to your partner about sexual history and STD testing.
- If you or your partner feel like avoiding these responsibilities, you may not be ready to have sex.

8. How does a person know if they have one?

Sample Answer:

- It's highly likely that there may not be symptoms.
- You can have an STD and not know it.
- Some common symptoms are:
 - Sores, bumps or blisters
 - Warts
 - Genital itching or discomfort
 - Discharge
 - Pain or burning during urination
- The best way to know is to get tested.

9. What happens if you have an STD and don't get it treated?

Sample answer:

- Harm to your health (to reproductive organs, heart disease, brain damage, blindness, arthritis, death).
- Can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) that can cause infertility, ectopic pregnancy or chronic pelvic pain
- May cause pain and discomfort.
- Some can spread to partners.
- Some can result in death.
- An infected mother can infect their unborn or newborn child.

10. It can be embarrassing to discuss. Is testing private? What if you're under 18?

Sample Answer:

- Yes, both testing and results are confidential, even if you're under 18.
- There is a law called HIPPA that will ensures your privacy.
- Ask for a male or female provider if that makes you more comfortable.

11. What resources are available to help pay for testing?

Sample Answer:

- Some clinics have:
 - Sliding pay scales
 - Free testing.
- You can get tested
 - by a doctor
 - in an emergency room
 - in many clinics,
 - especially family planning or sexual health clinics.
- Call an STD hotline for more information on testing in your area.

12. What happens during a test for an STD?

Sample Answer:

- A visual examination of the genitals.
- Take a urine or blood sample.
- Sometimes the doctor will swab genitals to collect cell samples.
- Samples are tested in a lab.
- You are contacted within a week or 10 days later with results.

13. What does a person do if they find out they have an STD?

Sample answer:

- Treatment depends on the disease.
- All are treatable.
- Some are curable.
- Your doctor will offer information and instructions.
- Notify your partner so they can be tested and treated.
- Notify any future partners you may have.

14. Is there a number I can call to ask questions anonymously?

Sample answer:

- **GUESTS READ:** Yes. The Minnesota Family Planning & STD Hotline, 1-800-78-FACTS voice/TTY. There are resources for people outside Minnesota on our website.
- **HOSTS READ:** For more information in Minnesota and nationally, visit www.echominnesota.org.

15. Do you have anything else you'd like to add on this subject?

Sample answer:

- Parents should remember to talk to teens about this subject.
- If you can talk openly about STDs and sexual health with your partner, you'll both be able to keep yourselves safer.