



# **Guide** **STBBI** **Sexually Transmitted and Blood-Borne Infections**

***For the Deaf and  
Hard of Hearing Community***



Document created by the Coalition Sida des Sourds du Québec

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# INTRODUCTION

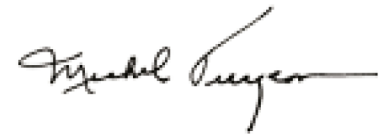
The Coalition Sida des Sourds du Québec (CSSQ) is pleased to present this latest tool for preventing STBBI (sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections): ***Guide: STBBI for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community.***

This document contains information on sexually transmitted infections (STIs), adapted visually to help members of the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing community improve their understanding of STIs and methods of protection.

American Sign Language (ASL) is the preferred communication method of members of the English Deaf community, and likewise, Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) is used in the French Deaf Community. These visual languages are distinct from any English or French spoken languages. Therefore, priority must be given to adapting information on STI prevention for Deaf and Hard-of-hearing people, in order to minimize their risk of contracting these illnesses. This document is also useful for people in the general population who have a low literacy level.

The CSSQ would like to thank organizations combatting HIV/AIDS, as well as Deaf organizations, for their support: they have kindly and generously donated their time and shared their ideas in the creation of this document.

Wishing you an enjoyable read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michel Turgeon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

*Michel Turgeon,  
Director General*



## DEFINITION OF STBBI

**400 000**

Quebecers, particularly youth, will be diagnosed with an STBBI this year.

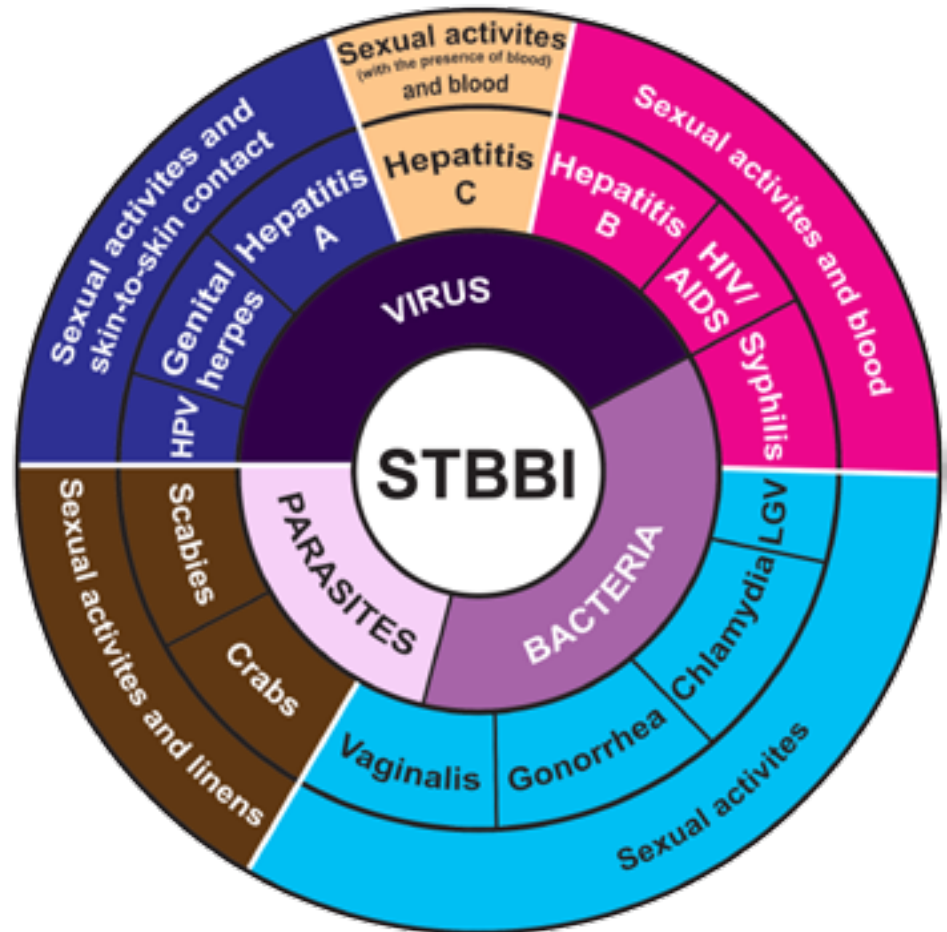
## STD, STI & STBBI

STDs, sexually transmitted diseases, have been renamed, and are now called sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The word “infection” is more accurate, since symptoms may or may not be present. The word “disease” is associated with symptoms being present. Therefore, someone with an STI may not necessarily feel sick, yet could transmit the infection.

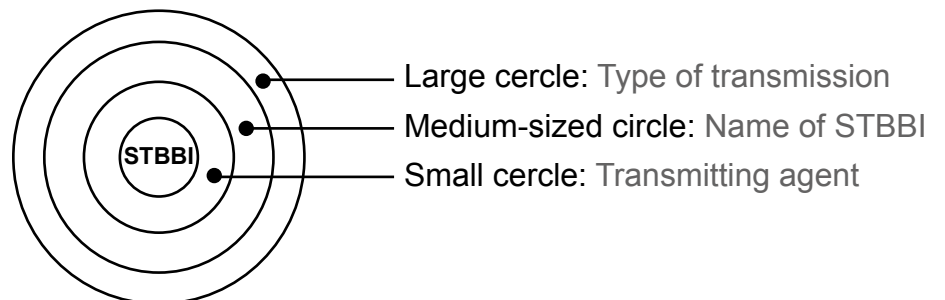
The term “sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections” (STBBI) is used to designate infections that are sexually transmitted or transmitted through the blood.



**S**exually **T**ransmitted and **B**lood-**B**orne **I**nfections



## LEGEND





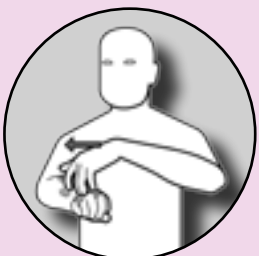
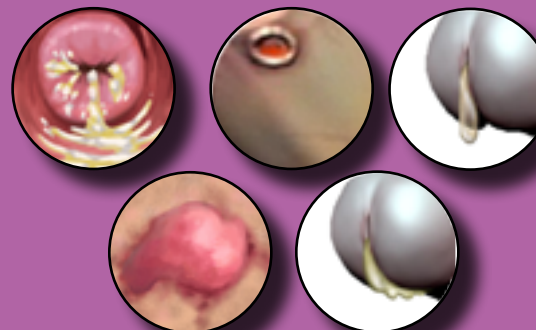
## VIRUS

Viral infections are caused by viruses transmitted from one person to another through sexual activity. In general, viral infections attack more than one part of the body at the same time.



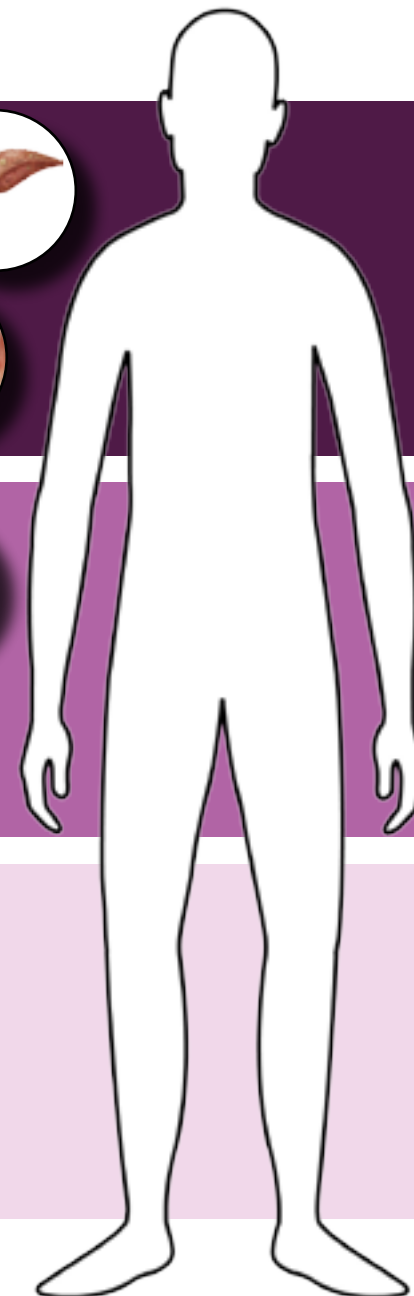
## BACTERIA

Bacterial infections are transmitted in several ways, including through sexual activity. These infections occur when bacteria attack one part of the body.



## PARASITES

Parasitic infections are caused by parasites transmitted from one person to another through sexual activity or skin-to-skin contact.





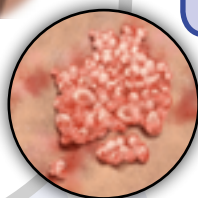
# HPV

**70% to 80%**  
of sexually active men and  
women are infected with  
HPV at least once in their  
lifetimes.

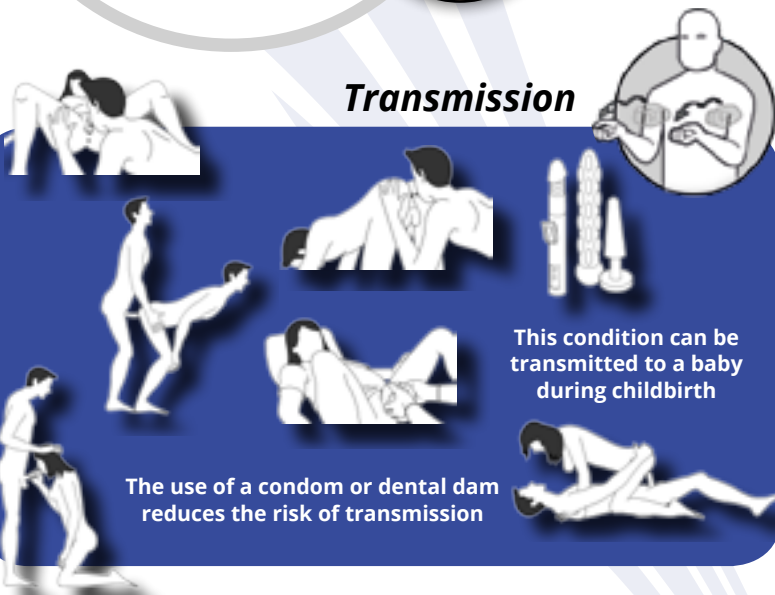
*The **Human  
Papilloma  
Virus** is one  
of the most  
common STBBI  
in Quebec.*



Condylomas, small lesions  
or cauliflower-shaped  
warts



## Transmission



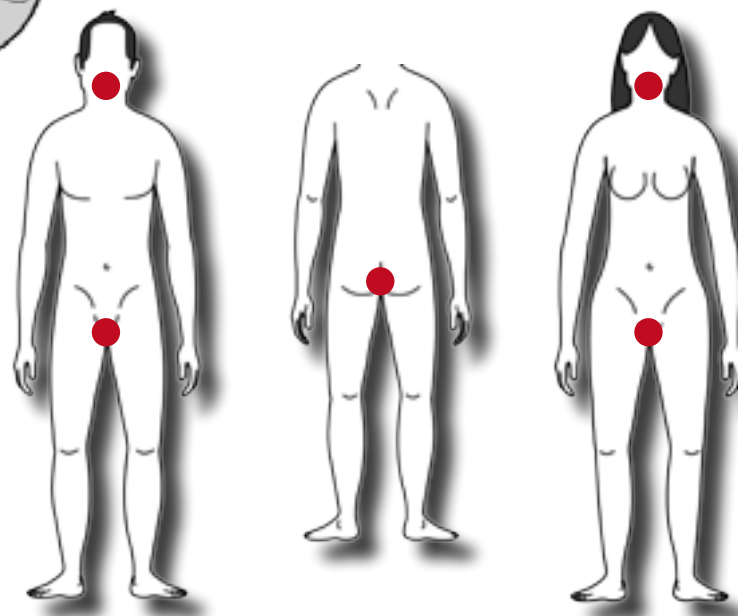
This condition can be  
transmitted to a baby  
during childbirth

The use of a condom or dental dam  
reduces the risk of transmission

# HPV



## Symptoms



- Lesions (condylomas) in the form of warts in the genital area or the anus, and less commonly in the mouth and on the lips
- Itching and skin irritations
- Lesions invisible to the naked eye could develop in the cervical area



**Symptoms are not always apparent.**

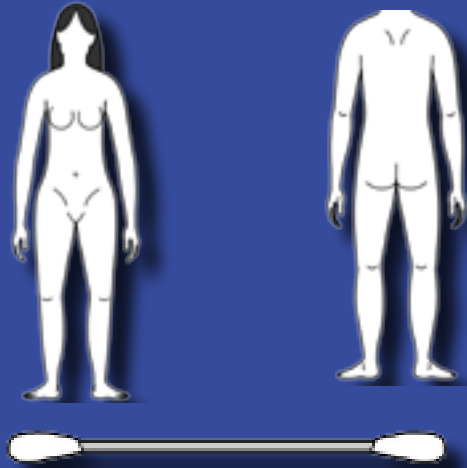


## Diagnosis

## HPV



Medical examination and possible blood test



To detect lesions invisible to the naked eye, women can take a cervical Pap test, and both men and women can take an anal Pap test

*If left untreated, HPV could lead to cervical or anal **cancer**.*



## Treatment

## HPV

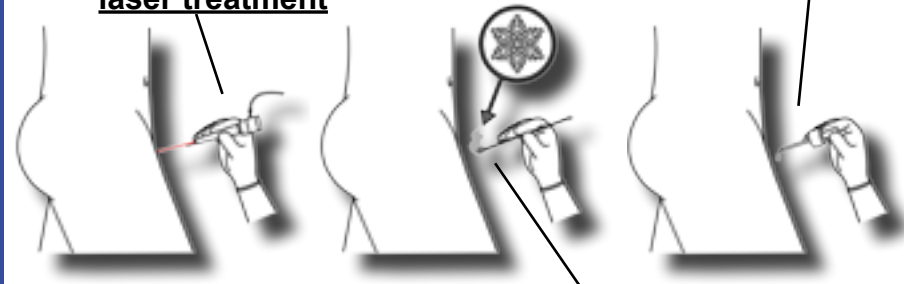
A vaccine is available that can prevent the types of HPV that are most often associated with cancer. It is most effective before people have their first sexual experience, because they have not yet been exposed to HPV

- Burning the lesions with liquid nitrogen
- Silver nitrate treatment
- Laser treatment in case of a particularly tenacious wart



laser treatment

silver nitrate



liquid nitrogen

***The symptoms can be treated,  
but there is no cure for HPV.***





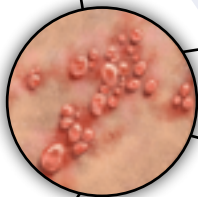
## GENITAL HERPES

*Herpes is  
**very widespread**  
in the general population.*

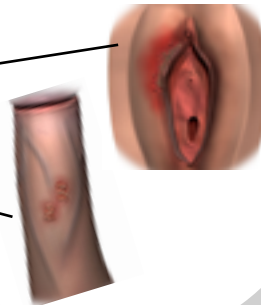
**Genital herpes  
is a sexually  
transmitted  
infection caused  
by the herpes  
simplex virus  
(type 1 or type 2).**

### Type 1

primarily affects the mouth and lips (cold sores), but can also be transmitted to the genital organs.



Herpes simplex sores



### Type 2

primarily affects the genitals, and rarely the mouth.

## GENITAL HERPES



### Transmission

Herpes simplex type 1 or type 2 is transmitted:

- Through sexual relations with or without penetration of the penis in the mouth, vagina or anus
- Through intimate contact (skin-to-skin) with an infected person (who may or may not have sores or blisters)
- Through kissing



***Herpes can be transmitted even  
when no symptoms are present.***



# GENITAL HERPES

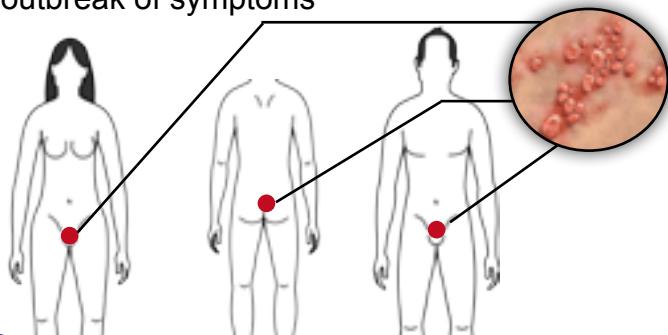
Genital herpes can **increase** the risk of becoming infected with or transmitting HIV.



## Symptoms

Someone infected with genital herpes may often experience no symptoms

- Small, painful sores near the genital area, anus, thighs, buttocks and inside the vagina
- Herpes outbreaks can recur for the rest of one's life. Each outbreak typically lasts from 5 to 7 days, but may take up to several weeks to resolve
- The frequency and severity of outbreaks varies from one person to another
- The risk of transmission is greater during an outbreak of symptoms



# GENITAL HERPES



## Diagnosis

Clinical examination after symptoms appear, or if one's partner is a carrier of the virus. A blood test may also be performed to confirm the diagnosis



Someone can be a carrier for years without any apparent symptoms, and can transmit the virus



## Treatment

There is no cure for herpes

There are two methods of treatment:

- Taking antiviral medication during an outbreak, to decrease the symptoms
- Taking antiviral medication regularly, to reduce the duration and frequency of outbreaks

Antiviral creams can also help to decrease the symptoms, and reduce the risk of transmission





# HEPATITIS A

Very effective vaccine  
available for **free**.

**Hepatitis A**  
is an inflammation  
of the liver caused  
by a viral infection.



Normal



Inflammation  
of the liver

## Transmission



### Through sexual contact:

Oral/anal relations, sharing  
of sex toys that come into  
contact with the anus

### Through the mouth:

Consuming contaminated  
water (ice cubes, food  
washed in contaminated  
water, contaminated materials  
drug-related equipment)



**Not transmitted through the blood.**

# HEPATITIS A



## Symptoms

**After 10 to 14 days**

- Dark urine
- Light-coloured stools
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin or whites of the eyes)



## Diagnosis

Blood test

The virus can be dormant for years  
before the appearance of symptoms



## Treatment

- Rest
- Eat healthy food
- Limit alcohol and drug consumption



**There is no specific treatment.  
Goes away on its own.**

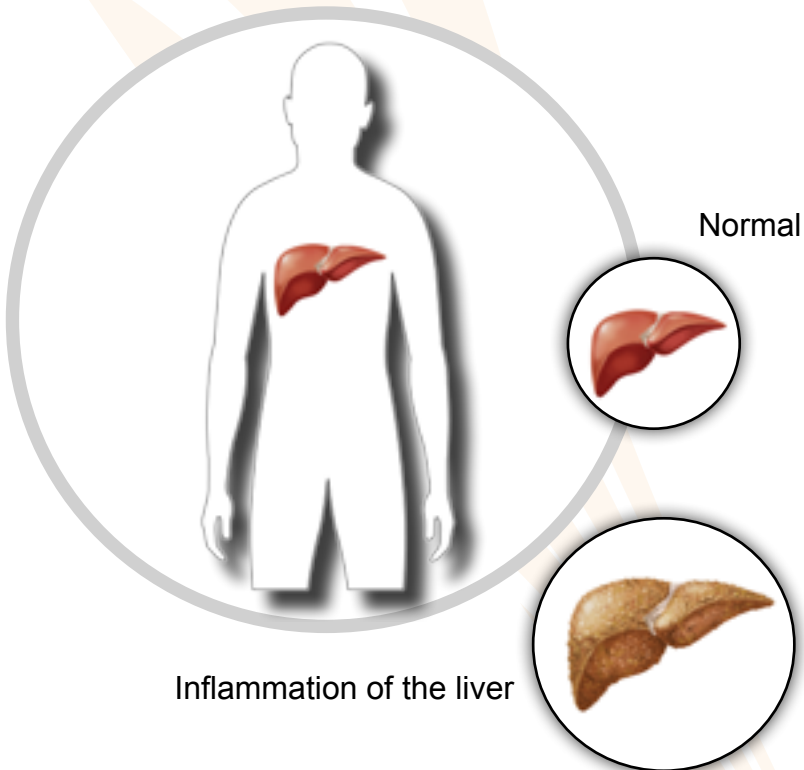


## HEPATITIS C

**75 to 85%**  
of infected people  
become chronic carriers  
of the virus.



**Hepatitis C**  
*is an inflammation of the liver caused by a viral infection.*



## Transmission

## HEPATITIS C

Through the blood, by sharing drug inhalation implements or needles



Through the blood, by tattooing or piercing with contaminated equipment

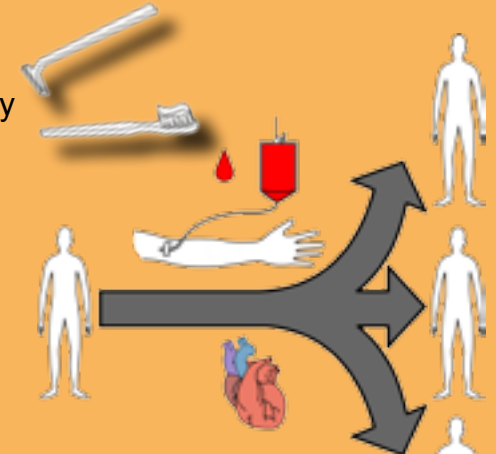


Having sexual relations where there is an exchange of blood



Using razors or toothbrushes containing contaminated blood

Transmitting the virus to the fetus during pregnancy



Receiving a blood transfusion in unsanitary conditions



## HEPATITIS C



### Symptoms

- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Light-coloured stools and dark urine
- Heartburn or abdominal pain
- Jaundice, in some cases
- If left untreated, there is a risk of **fibrosis**, **cirrhosis** or **liver cancer**



***There are often no symptoms.***

*Without treatment, Hepatitis C could develop into **fibrosis**, **cirrhosis** and/or **cancer**.*



### Diagnosis

- Blood test 8 to 9 weeks after exposure
- A FibroScan and/or biopsy can measure the progression of the illness in the infected person



## HEPATITIS C



### Treatment

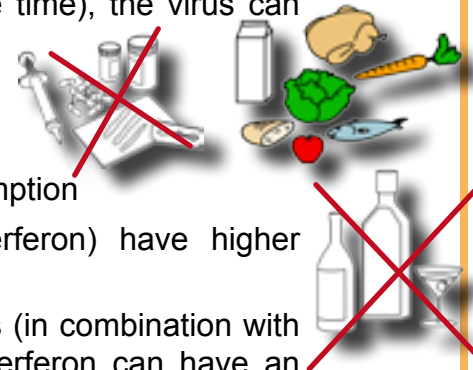
Consult a doctor

In some cases (15-20% of the time), the virus can disappear on its own:

- Rest
- Eat healthy food
- Limit alcohol and drug consumption

New treatments (without Interferon) have higher success rates

The success rate of treatments (in combination with Interferon) is around 50%. Interferon can have an effect on mental health



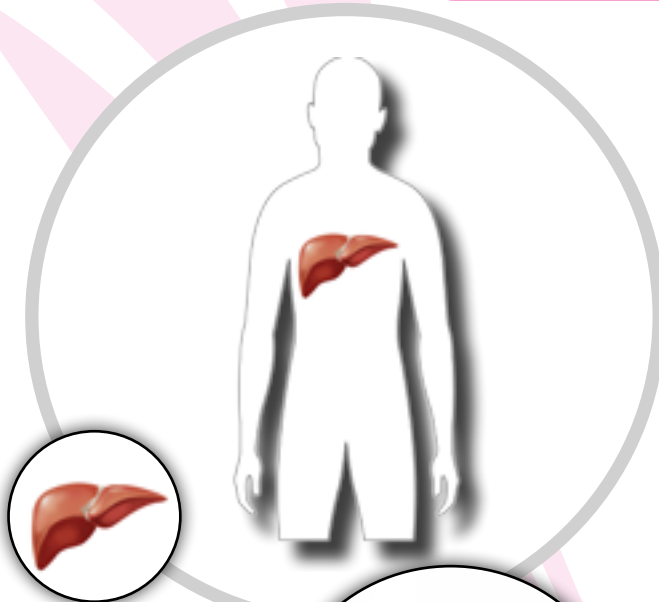
*Most of the time, Hepatitis C can be cured **with treatment**. Being cured offers no protection against re-infection.*

## HEPATITIS B



Immunity  
after a **cure**.

**Hepatitis B**  
is an inflammation  
of the liver caused  
by a viral infection.



Normal



Inflammation of the liver

## HEPATITIS B



## Transmission

**Blood:** blood-to-blood contact during sex, tattooing, piercing, drugs, pregnancy and childbirth, razors, toothbrushes



**Sex:** anal, oral, and vaginal penetration unprotected by a condom



**Contact with** sperm, vaginal secretions, blood, saliva



An effective vaccine is available.



## HEPATITIS B



If the infection is not cured, it can become chronic in **10% of all cases.**

**Symptoms****Symptoms after 2 to 6 months**

Same symptoms as Hepatitis A + Joint pain



If left untreated, can develop into **cirrhosis** or **cancer**

**Diagnosis****Blood test**

The virus can be dormant for years before the appearance of symptoms

**Treatment****Consult a doctor**

In 90% of cases, this illness can go away on its own:

- Rest
- Eat healthy food
- Limiter alcohol and drug consumption



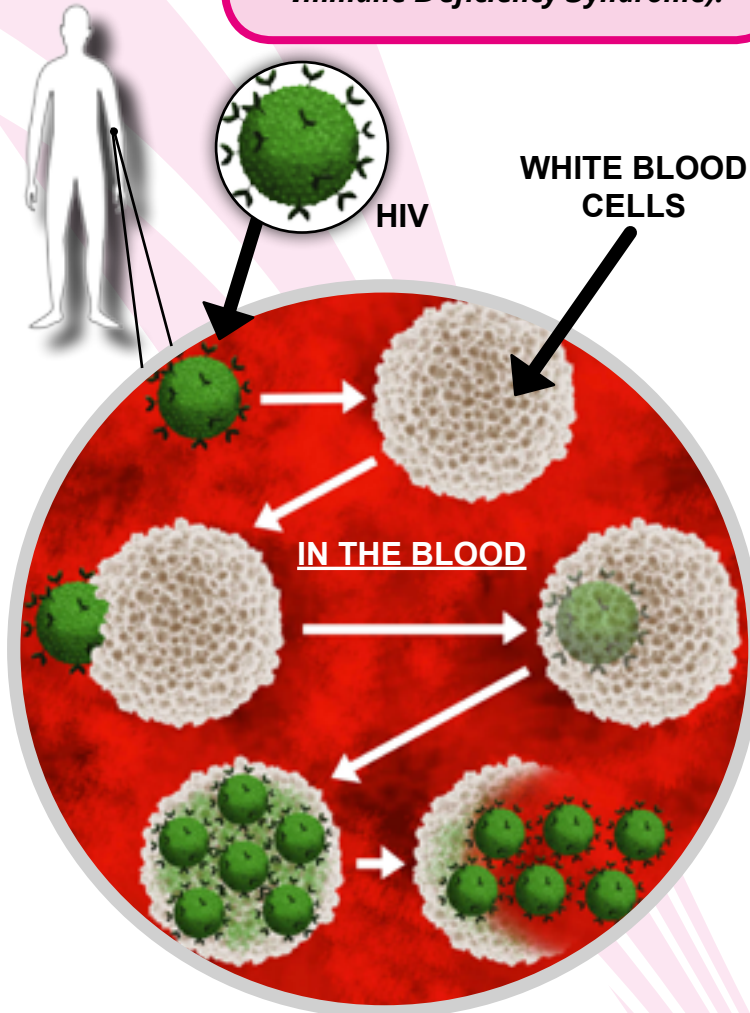
**An emergency treatment is available for those who have been exposed to Hepatitis B.**



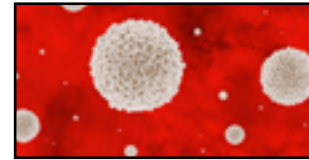


**25 %** of people  
infected with HIV are  
unaware of it.

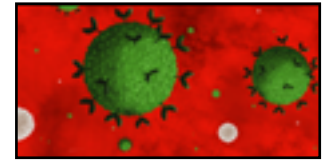
**HIV**  
(*Human Immunodeficiency Virus*) is  
the virus that causes **AIDS** (*Acquired  
Immune Deficiency Syndrome*).



The role of the immune system is to defend the body against infection. Therefore, when a person comes down with HIV, his or her body becomes more vulnerable to infections and other illnesses.

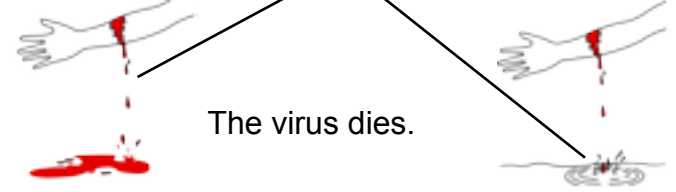


BEFORE



AFTER

The virus is very fragile and sensitive and cannot survive for long outside the body, in the air, in water, or on objects.



A carrier of HIV who does not receive treatment could develop AIDS.



**AIDS:** The immune system is weakened to the point where the person is vulnerable to opportunistic infections. However, it is now possible to recover one's health through treatments against HIV.



# HIV

**20 000:**  
Estimated number of people  
infected with HIV in Quebec  
in 2014.

## Transmission

**Bodily fluids:**  
blood, sperm, mother's milk,  
vaginal or anal secretions



## Gateways:

Weakened mucosa in the mouth, vagina, rectum and urethra (the canal through which urine passes from the penis or vulva), and other fragile tissues (glans and foreskin)

## TYPES OF TRANSMISSION



**No risk:** HIV is not transmitted through saliva, sweat, tears, urine, feces, clothes, utensils, dishes or toilet seats

## Prevention

Prevention can take many forms:

- Abstinence
- Use of a condom
- **PrEP** (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis)
- **PEP** (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis)
- Alternate sexual activities (cybersex, masturbation)
- Treatment to reduce the viral load in a seropositive partner



**Effective treatment reduces the risk of transmission.**





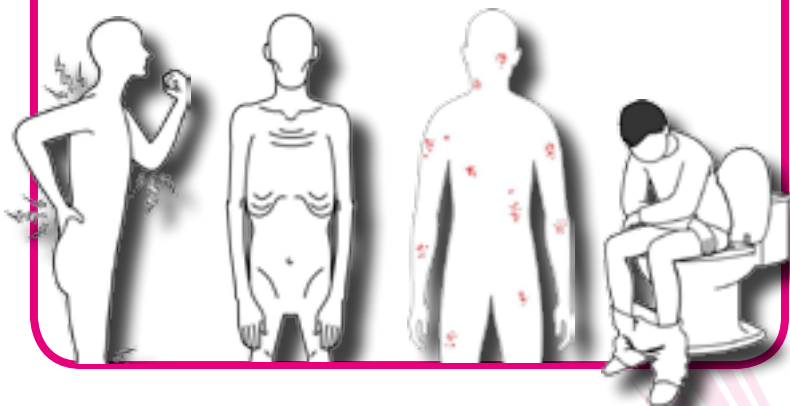
HIV



### Symptoms

- Fatigue
- Diarrhea
- Fever, sore throat, and/or headache
- Skin rashes
- Muscle or joint pain
- Swollen lymph nodes in the neck, armpits or groin
- Major weight loss

**Symptoms are often not present in people infected with HIV.**



### Diagnosis

Rapid screening with a small amount of blood: antibody test with results available within a few minutes



Fourth-generation blood test: antibody test and antigen test with results available within a few weeks

Viral load test (NAAT): test of a blood sample for the presence of the virus



### Preventative treatment

**PrPE (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis):** Treatment before exposure to the virus, to reduce the risk of transmission

If you think you may have come into contact with the virus: **PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis):** Treatment lasting 30 days, which must begin within the first **72 hours** after exposure



### Treatment

Carried out with the consultation of a health care professional

Slows the progression of the infection but does not cure it



HIV

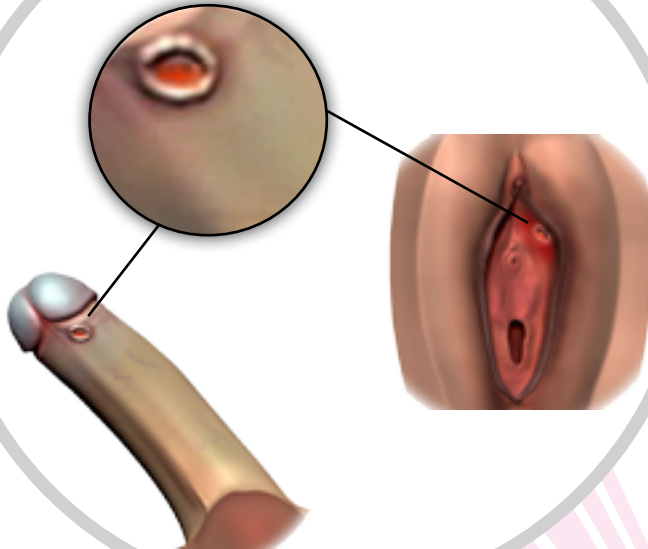


# SYPHILIS

As of the early 2000s,  
syphilis has made a  
**comeback**  
in Quebec.

*Syphilis is an infection caused by the bacterium **Treponema pallidum**. If left untreated, syphilis progresses in three stages (see Symptoms).*

**Treponema pallidum**



## Transmission

# SYPHILIS

- From oral, vaginal or anal sex



- From intimate (**skin-to-skin**) contact with a lesion

- From shared sex toys



- From bacteria transmitted from the mother to her baby during pregnancy and childbirth



- In rare cases, from the use of contaminated injection equipment



**Syphilis is transmitted during the first and second stage. Third-stage syphilis is not contagious.**



# SYPHILIS



**Untreated**  
syphilis may cause cardiac  
problems.



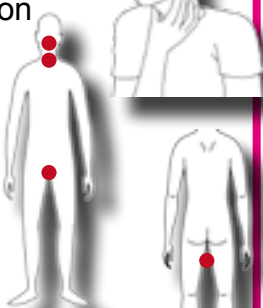
## Symptoms

There are often no symptoms

When symptoms do appear, they vary depending on the stage of infection

### Stage I (from 3 to 90 days)

- Presence of a painless ulcer, or chancre, on the genitalia, anus, mouth or throat
- Ulcers may disappear after approximately 3 weeks, but the infection is still present



### Stage II (from 2 weeks to 6 months after the onset of infection)

- The chancre may have disappeared, or not
- Fever and other flu-like symptoms
- Skin sores or rashes on the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, or elsewhere on the body



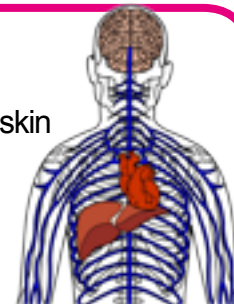
**Latent phase can last for several months to several years without any apparent symptoms.**



## Stage III (from 1 to over 20 years)

- Damage to the heart, brain, bones and liver
- Lesions in the bones, subcutaneous tissues, and skin
- Damage to the cardiovascular and nervous systems (neuro-syphilis)

If left untreated, third-stage syphilis can cause death



## Diagnosis

Blood test taken during regular screening

If symptoms appear, a clinical examination is necessary



## Treatment

There is no vaccine

Syphilis is treated by injecting antibiotics, and the symptoms are treated with topical creams

It is recommended that partners of people who test positive for syphilis receive treatment as well



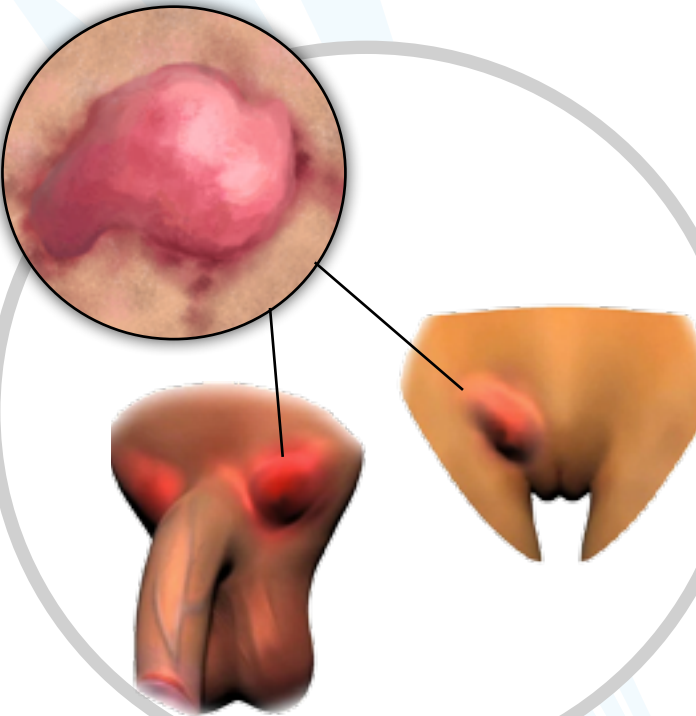
# SYPHILIS



**LGV**

**Change**  
condoms and gloves after  
each penetration.

**Lymphogranuloma Venereum (LGV) is a bacterial infection.**



**LGV**

**Transmission**



- From oral, vaginal or anal sex



- From inserting fingers or the fist into the anus or vagina (fisting)

- From sharing unclean or unsanitary sex toys



- From having sexual relations with multiple partners, without changing the glove or condom after each partner



- From bacteria transmitted from the mother to her baby during childbirth





# LGV



## Symptoms

There are often no symptoms  
If left untreated, LGV progresses in 3 stages:

### Stage I (3 to 30 days after the onset of infection)

- A small painless sore (mouth, urethra, vagina, glans)

### Stage II (2 to 6 weeks)

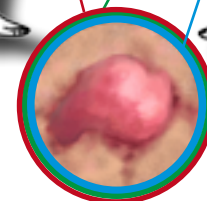
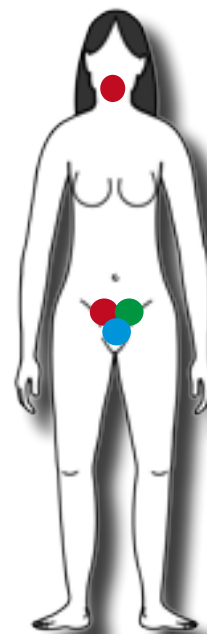
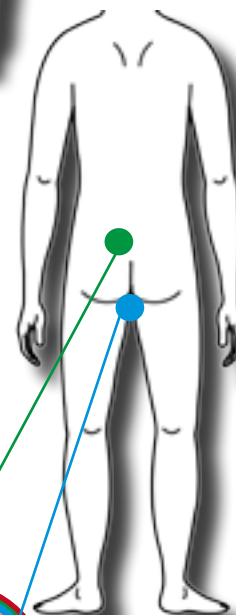
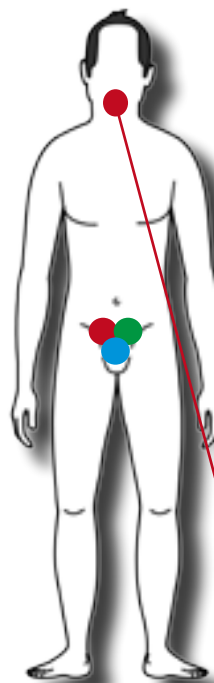
- Possible infection in the lymph nodes (often in the groin), causing pain and fever
- Inflammation of the rectum, urethra or cervix
- Abscesses and pus-filled discharge from the lesions
- General malaise (muscle pain, loss of appetite, chills, etc.)

### Stage III

If untreated, LGV can lead to severe complications:

- Possibility of small bumps or growths around the anus
- Genital abscesses

LGV lesions can serve as a **gateway** for other STBBI.



# LGV

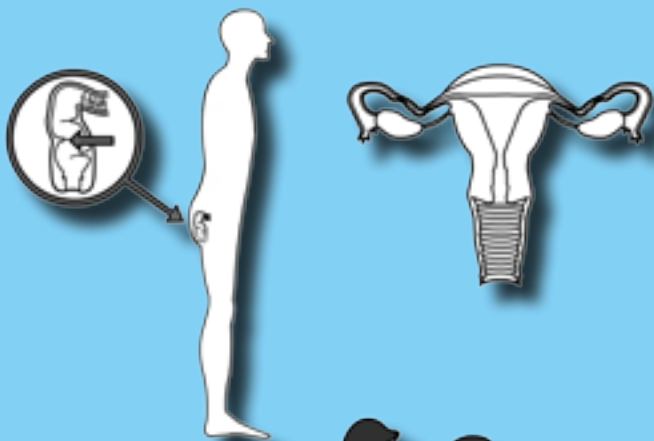


## LGV



### Diagnosis

If symptoms appear, a doctor will take a sample from the anus, rectum, urethra or cervix



The results are confirmed with a blood test



### Treatment

If caught early, LGV is easy to treat

A health-care professional will prescribe a treatment for you to take for three weeks. Your sexual partners from the **last 60 days** must be informed and treated as well

If you are in the third stage of LGV, you may need surgery, followed by 4 to 6 weeks of antibiotics. Plastic surgery may be necessary afterwards



***There is no***  
*routine testing for LGV.*



# CHLAMYDIA



*Chlamydia is very widespread, particularly in 15- to 24-year-olds.*

***If left untreated, may cause sterility (inability to have children).***



## Transmission

From oral, vaginal or anal sex without a condom or dental dam

Can be transmitted from a mother to her baby during childbirth

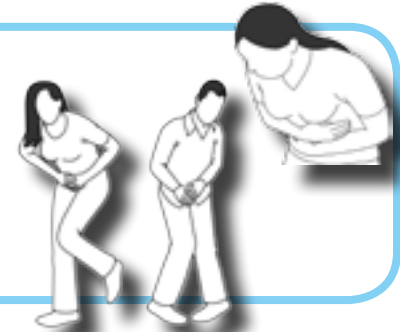


# CHLAMYDIA



## Symptoms

- Abnormal genital discharge
- Painful urination
- Pain in the lower abdomen
- There are often no symptoms



## Diagnosis

Urine sample

Sample (Q-tips) from the back of the throat and the anus



## Treatment

- Cured through antibiotics (injected or oral)
- Wait until the treatment is complete before having sexual relations
- It is possible to become infected again
- Partners should be treated even if they have not been tested

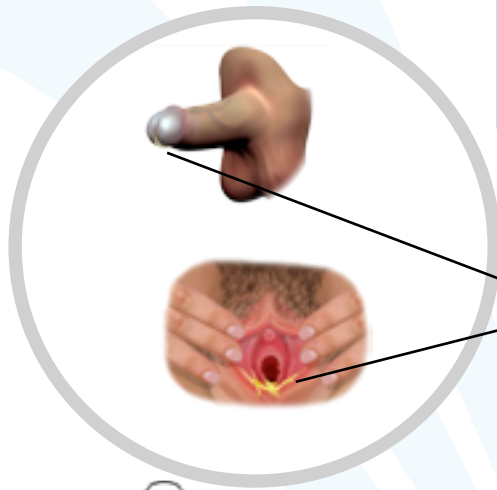


# GONORRHEA



**If left untreated,**  
may cause sterility  
(inability to have  
children).

**Gonorrhea is  
very widespread,  
particularly in  
adolescents and  
young adults (15- to  
24-year-olds).**



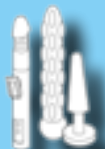
«The clap»



## Transmission

From oral, vaginal or anal sex without  
a condom or dental dam

Can be transmitted from a mother to  
her baby during childbirth



# GONORRHEA

## Symptoms

- Abnormal genital discharge
- Painful urination
- Pain in the lower abdomen
- Pain in the throat
- There are often no symptoms



## Diagnosis

Urine sample

Sample (Q-tips) from the back  
of the throat and the anus



## Treatment

- Cured through antibiotics (injected or oral)
- Wait until the treatment is complete before  
having sexual relations
- It is possible to become infected again
- Partners should be treated even if they have  
not been tested

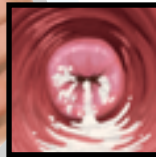
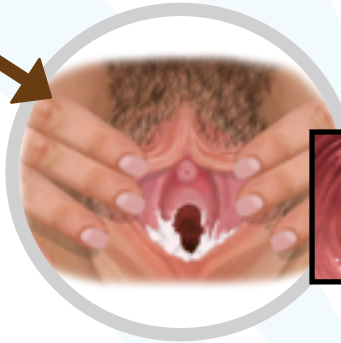


# VAGINITIS

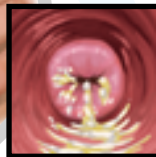


**75%** of women will have a vaginal infection at least once in their lifetimes.

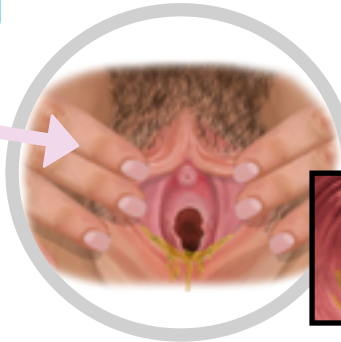
Vaginitis can develop even without sexual contact.



**«Yeast vaginitis»**  
caused by a fungus called *Candida albicans*



**«Bacterial vaginosis»**  
caused by a bacteria



**«Trichomonal vaginitis»**  
caused by a parasite called *Trichomonas vaginalis*

# VAGINITIS



## Transmission and causes

### Yeast vaginitis (*Candida albicans*)

generally caused by a change in the vaginal flora:

- Antibiotics
- The use of scented products (vaginal douches, soaps, wipes, laundry detergent)
- Unprotected vaginal sex
- Hormonal changes (pregnancy)



### Bacterial vaginosis

caused by:

- Unprotected vaginal sex
- Vaginal frottage (rubbing)
- Vaginal douches
- (Sometimes) the use of an IUD or contaminated sex toys



### Trichomonal vaginitis

caused by:

- Unprotected vaginal sex
- Sharing of contaminated sex toys



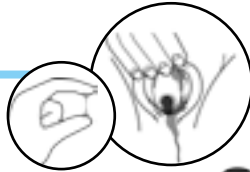


**Change condoms**  
when switching from the  
anus to the vagina.

## VAGINITIS



### Symptoms



### SYMPTOMS COMMON TO ALL 3 TYPES OF VAGINITIS:

#### In women:

- Increased vaginal discharge
- Vaginal itching and skin irritation
- Abdominal pain
- Pain during vaginal sex
- Burning feeling during urination
- Inflammation of the vulva or vagina



#### In men:

- Burning feeling during urination
- Penile discharge
- Burning feeling or skin irritation of the penis

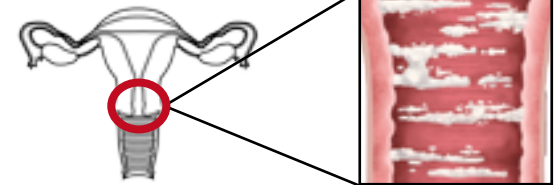


## VAGINITIS

### SYMPTOMS SPECIFIC TO WOMEN:

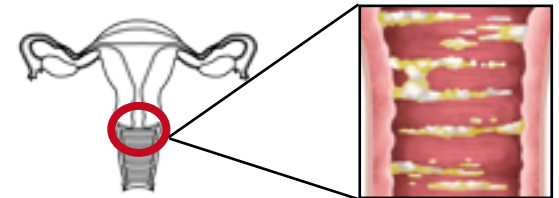
#### Yeast vaginitis:

whitish, lumpy secretions resembling cottage cheese



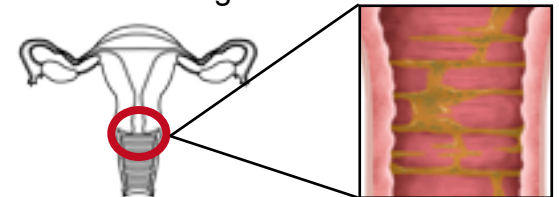
#### Bacterial vaginosis:

strong fishy odour, unpleasant odour, thick milky, greyish or yellowish discharge



#### Trichomonal vaginitis:

foamy yellowish or greenish discharge



**Some people experience no symptoms.**





# VAGINITIS

**Consult**  
a doctor as soon  
as you notice an  
abnormal change  
in your vaginal  
secretions.



## Diagnosis

Consult a doctor, who will take a smear (cotton tip) of the vaginal secretions, for analysis



# VAGINITIS



## Treatment

If this is a first infection, it is important to consult a doctor in order to choose the correct treatment



Vaginal infections are treated through antifungal creams and pills (taken orally or inserted in the vagina), or antibiotics, depending on the type of infection



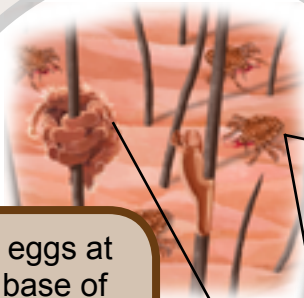
# CRABS



**Shampooing  
and  
thorough cleaning**  
will prevent re-infestation.

**Pubic lice also called  
«crabs lice  
or crabs»,  
infest pubic hair.**

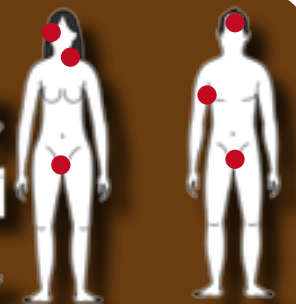
The eggs at  
the base of  
the hairs are  
called  
«nits».



## Transmission



Contact with  
contaminated  
clothing or bedding  
(clothes, sheets,  
towels, etc.)



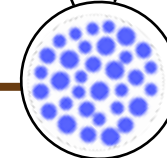
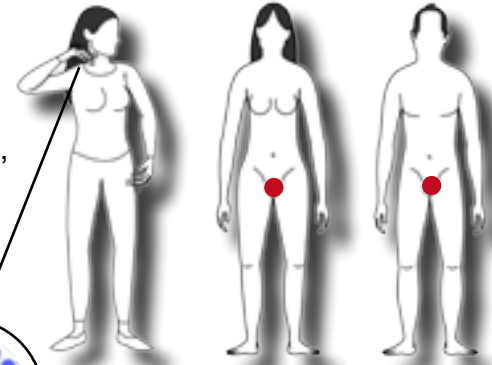
Skin-to-skin contact  
with an infected  
person

# CRABS

## Symptoms



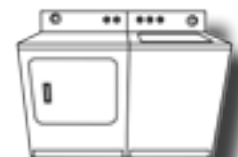
- Itching and skin irritation
- Lice in the shape of crabs, visible to the naked eye
- Small blue spots



## Treatment



- Cream, lotion, antiparasitic shampoo
- Wash all linens (bedding, clothes, towels, etc.) in hot water, or dry clean them



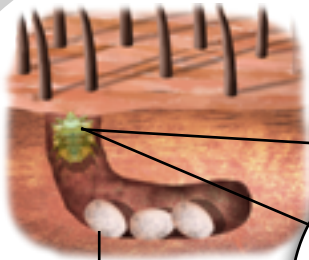
**Pubic lice do not transmit other STBBI.**

# SCABIES

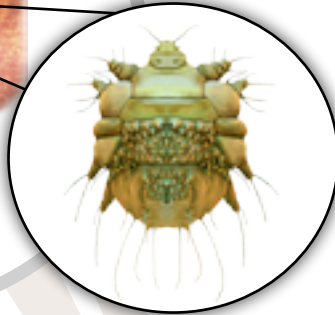


**Creams  
and  
thorough cleaning**  
*will prevent re-infestation.*

*Scabies is a skin  
condition caused by  
small parasites that  
burrow under the  
skin and lay eggs  
there.*



**EGGS**



## Transmission



Contact with contaminated  
clothing or bedding (clothes,  
sheets, towels, etc.)

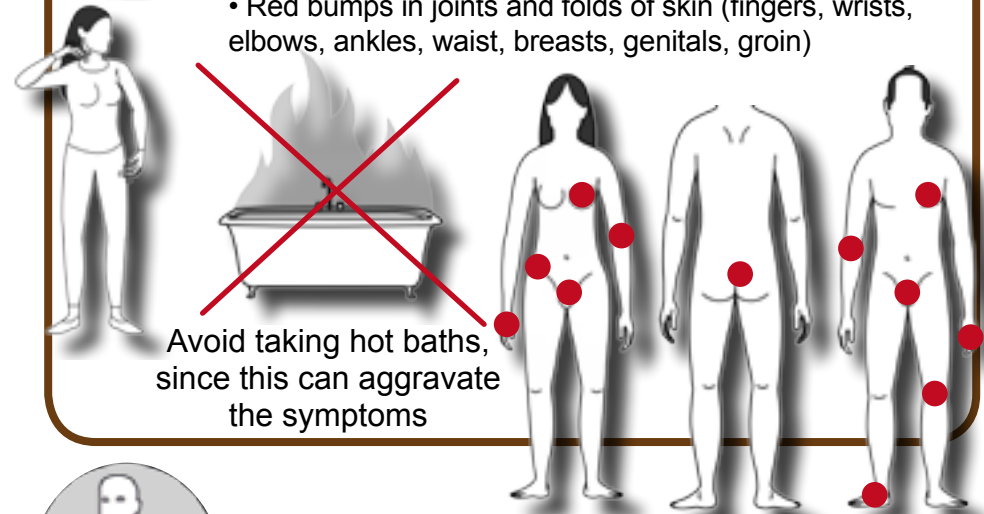
Skin-to-skin  
contact with an  
infected person

# SCABIES

## Symptoms



- Intense itching and skin irritation, especially at night
- Tunnels (white streaks) just below the surface of the skin
- Red bumps in joints and folds of skin (fingers, wrists, elbows, ankles, waist, breasts, genitals, groin)

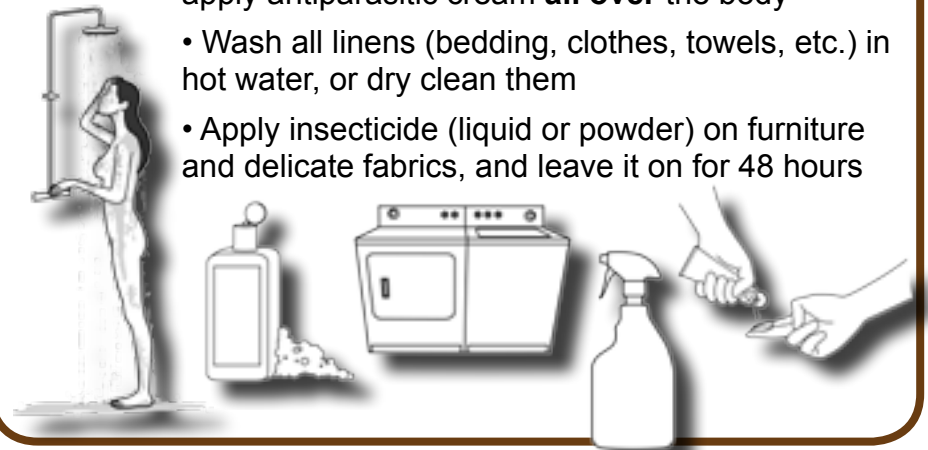


Avoid taking hot baths,  
since this can aggravate  
the symptoms

## Treatment



- In order to get rid of scabies, it is essential to apply antiparasitic cream **all over** the body
- Wash all linens (bedding, clothes, towels, etc.) in hot water, or dry clean them
- Apply insecticide (liquid or powder) on furniture and delicate fabrics, and leave it on for 48 hours

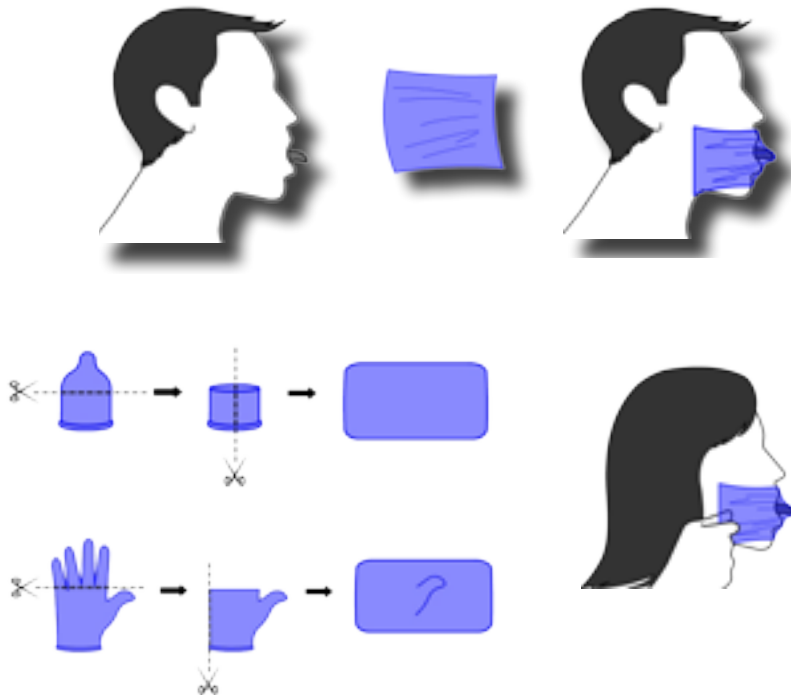


## HOW TO USE CONDOM?

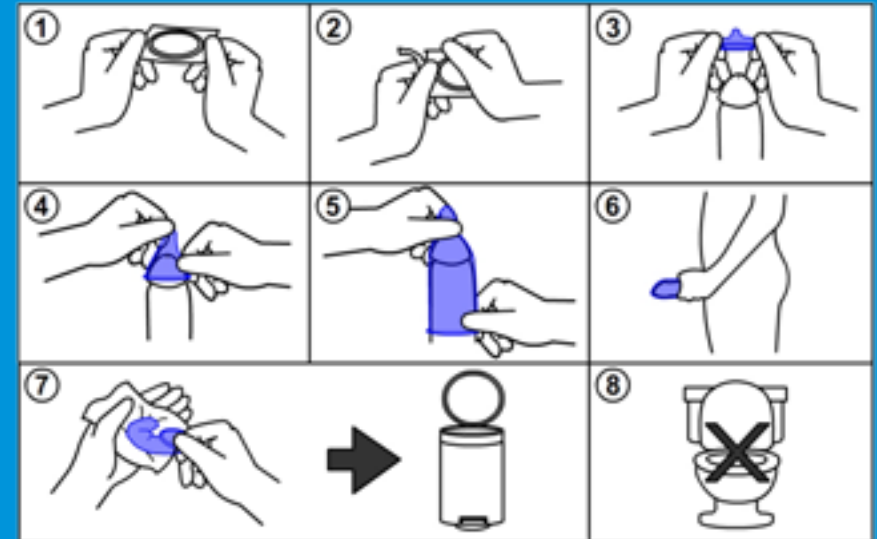
### Male/Female condom and dental dams:

Here are some tips to ensure that condoms remain intact:

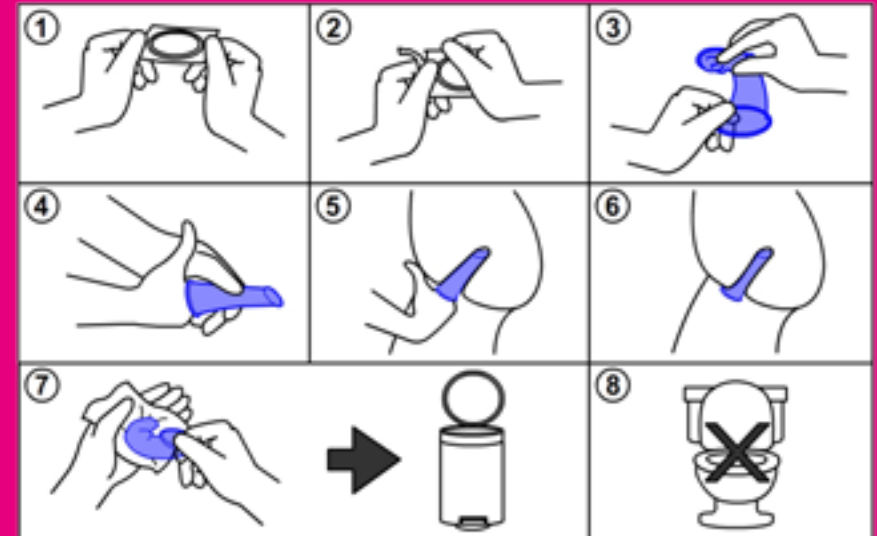
- Always double-check the expiration date marked on the condom box or wrapper; do not use if the expiry date has passed
- Do not store condoms in pockets, wallets or warm places
- Do not open condom wrappers with teeth or scissors
- Pay attention to rings, fingernails, and body piercings



### Male condom



### Female condom



## **WHERE TO TAKE THE TEST?**

(In specialized clinics or an HIV organization of your choice)

- A CLSC or medical clinic near you
- At your family doctor's office
- The hospital

Visit this page for a complete list of health organizations in Quebec that provide screening for HIV and other STBBI:  
[http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/sujets/prob\\_sante/itss/index.php?home](http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/sujets/prob_sante/itss/index.php?home)

**French website:** [http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/sujets/prob\\_sante/itss/index.php?listes\\_centres\\_depistages](http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/sujets/prob_sante/itss/index.php?listes_centres_depistages)  
*(A link to this page can also be found on the CSSQ website, [www.cssq.org](http://www.cssq.org))*

Montreal has many clinics specialized in STBBI, including the **Clinique du Quartier-Latin** and **Clinique l'Actuel**, **Projet SPOT**, also in Montreal, serves gay men and men who have sex with men.

To find out if health professionals specialized in STBBI are available in your region, call your local **HIV organization**.

## **CONTACT US**

Our hours of operation are 9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday. We are also open on Wednesdays from 9 am to 9 pm (by appointment).

### **Administration**

Email: [info@cssq.org](mailto:info@cssq.org)

### **Prevention Services**

Email: [intervention@cssq.org](mailto:intervention@cssq.org)

### **Support Services**

Email: [soutien@cssq.org](mailto:soutien@cssq.org)

[www.cssq.org](http://www.cssq.org)





Other document available.



**SAFE SEX FOR THE DEAF  
AND HARD OF HEARING  
COMMUNITY**

