

# How Can I Protect Myself from Getting a Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD)?

There are some basic things to do to protect yourself:

- Not having sex or sexual relations is the only sure way to prevent STDs.
- Use a latex condom every time you have sex. (If you use a lubricant, make sure it is water-based.)
- Limit your number of sexual partners. The more partners you have, the more likely you are to become infected with an STD.
- Practice monogamy. This means having sex with only one person. That person must also have sex with only you to reduce your risk.
- Choose your sex partners with care. Don't have sex with someone whom you suspect may have an STD.
- Don't use alcohol or drugs before you have sex. You may be less likely to use a condom if you are drunk or high.
- Know the symptoms of STDs. This may include genital pain, sores, or discharge. But, remember many STDs do not have any symptoms at all.
- If you are concerned, get checked for STDs. Don't risk giving the infection to someone else.

