



The terms below are defined in the context of their use within this health guide. For complete definitions, consult a reputable medical dictionary.

Definition of Terms

- Acute infection** A short-term illness caused by a germ.
- AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome)** The late stage of HIV infection. When you have AIDS, your immune system is very weak.
- Alcohol hand cleaner** A liquid, foam, or gel used to clean hands. It contains alcohol to kill germs.
- Antibiotics** A type of medicine used to treat bacterial infections. Antibiotics do not work on viral infections.
- Antiviral drugs** A type of medicine used for viral infections such as influenza (flu) and HIV.
- Bacteria** A type of germ that may cause infection. Not all bacteria are harmful or cause infection. Most bacterial infections are treated with antibiotics.
- Biopsy** The removal of a small piece of an organ or tissue to look for signs of disease or damage.
- Bladder** The organ in the urinary tract that stores urine.
- Chronic infection** A long-term illness caused by a germ.

- Chlamydia** An infection caused by bacteria. It is the most common STD in the U.S.
- Circumcision** The surgical removal of some or the entire foreskin covering the tip of the penis.
- Cirrhosis** Scarring of the liver.
- Cold** An infection of the nose, sinuses, or throat caused by a virus.
- “Community” or “Herd” Immunity** Immunity that occurs when most people have been vaccinated against or have had an infection. This stops the spread of a contagious disease to protect even those not vaccinated to avoid large outbreaks of disease.
- Condom, female** A plastic barrier inserted into the vagina before intercourse to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and pregnancy.
- Condom, male** A latex, “lambskin”, or plastic barrier used to cover the penis during vaginal, anal or oral sex to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and pregnancy.
- Contagious** The spread of germs from one person (or other living organism) to another.
- Dental dam** A square piece of latex (rubber) or silicone used as a barrier during oral sex to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).
- Fungus (fungi)** A type of organism that may cause infection. Fungi can cause vaginal yeast infections and severe diseases like pneumonia in people with poor immune systems.
- Genital warts** Small bumps or groups of bumps in the genital area caused by human papillomavirus (HPV).
- Genital yeast infection** More common in women, an infection caused by a fungus called candida.
- Gonorrhea** A sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by bacteria. Also known as “the clap” or “the drips”. It affects both men and women.
- Hepatitis** A swollen (inflamed) liver that can be caused by viral infections, drugs, diseases, alcohol, and/or toxins.
- Herpes** A sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by two types of herpes simplex viruses.
- HIV (human immunodeficiency virus)** A virus that attacks and weakens the immune system.
- Human papillomavirus (HPV)** The most common sexually transmitted disease (STD) in the United States. There are over 40 types of HPV viruses that can infect genital, mouth or throat areas. Some can lead to genital warts and others increase the risk for cancer.
- Immune system** Parts of the body that protect against germs and diseases.
- Immunity** The ability of your body to avoid an infection or disease.
- Influenza (flu)** A respiratory illness caused by a flu virus.

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| Kidneys | Organs in the urinary tract that collect waste from blood to make urine. |
| Lymph nodes | Small organs within the immune system spread throughout the body that help fight infection. |
| Parasite | An organism that can cause infection. Parasites may cause infections such as trichomoniasis. |
| Pneumonia | An infection of the lungs that can be caused by bacteria, virus, fungi, or parasites. |
| Safer sex | The use of barriers such as condoms during vaginal, anal or oral sex to prevent and control the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STD) and other infections. |
| Sexually transmitted disease (STD) | Infection spread by vaginal, anal or oral sex, and genital touching. STDs can be caused by bacteria, parasites, or viruses. Common STDs include chlamydia, HPV, and herpes. |
| Sexually transmitted infection (STI) | See sexually transmitted disease (STD). |
| Syphilis | A sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by bacteria that can produce sores on the genitals, vagina, anus, rectum, and even on the lips and in the mouth. |
| Trichomoniasis | A sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by a small parasite. It affects both men and women. It is known as "trich". |
| Ureters | Tubes of the urinary tract that move urine from the kidneys to the bladder. |
| Urethra | The tube within the urinary tract that carries urine from the bladder out of the body. |
| Urinary tract | The body system that makes, stores, and carries urine out of the body. Includes the kidneys, ureters, bladder, and urethra. |
| Urinary tract infection (UTI) | An infection that occurs when bacteria grow in the urinary tract. |
| Vaccine | A medical preparation given to help the body produce immunity or to fight disease. |
| Virus | A type of germ that causes infections and disease. Influenza (flu), HIV, and herpes are caused by viruses. Antiviral drugs are used to treat viral infections. |
| Yeast | A type of fungus that can lead to infection. |