

Often there are no signs or symptoms. So if you've had sex with someone you think is infected with a **STI**, a test from the doctor may be the only sure way to tell if you're infected.

Because STIs can affect anyone, it's important to know what to look for in yourself and others. Be alert to body changes in the genital area. These warning signs might appear right away, or they might not show up for weeks or even months or they may come and go. Even if the signs and symptoms do disappear, the disease might still be active. STIs usually do not go away on their own.

Here are some signs or symptoms that may mean you have an STI

- Unusual discharge or smell from your vagina.
- Pain in your pelvic (lower belly) area or deep inside your vagina during sex.
- Burning or itching around your vagina.
- Bleeding from your vagina other than your regular menstrual periods.
- Sores, bumps, or blisters near your sex organs, rectum, or mouth.
- Burning or pain when you urinate.
- Swelling or redness in your throat.
- Swelling in the area around your sexual organs.

Women bear a disproportionate burden of STI-related complications, including pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, potentially fatal ectopic pregnancies, and cancer of the reproductive tract. Left untreated in women, it can cause pelvic inflammatory disease which is associated with ectopic pregnancy and even sterility.