

## Enrollee Newsletter

April 2020

Volume 5, Issue 4

*April is Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Month*

### Community Care Plan, 'the health plan with a heart'

STI's or sexually transmitted infections are infections passed from person to person through sexual contact. Some STIs are herpes, HIV, and HPV. They are also called STDs or sexually transmitted diseases. STIs are usually spread by having vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Some STIs have only mild symptoms or no symptoms at all. The symptoms might be mistaken for something else (i.e. a urinary tract infection (UTI) or yeast infection).

#### **What health problems can an STI cause?**

- Trouble getting pregnant
- Infertility
- Pregnancy complications
- Health issues for the unborn baby
- Infections throughout the body
- Damage to the organs
- Cancer (i.e. cervical cancer)
- Death

There are some STIs that can be cured, and some that cannot be cured. For some STI's that cannot be cured, there are treatments to manage their symptoms. Each year nearly 20 million people in the United States get an STI. Half of the new infections are found in people ages 15 to 24.

#### **STI testing**

There are different tests (screenings) to check for STI's, these include:

- Pelvic exam
- Physical exam
- Blood test
- Urine sample
- Fluid sample
- Tissue sample

#### **STI Prevention: How can I prevent an STI?**

The prevention items work best when used together. One method only cannot protect you from all STIs

- **Vaccines:** The HPV and the Hepatitis B vaccine protect you against these STIs.
- **Condoms:** A man should put a condom on before having oral, vaginal, or anal sex.
- **Monogamy (one partner)/limiting partners:** having sex with one partner can lower the risk of contracting an STI. Having more partners can increase your risk.
- **Not douching:** Douching removes normal bacteria from the vagina that protects from infection.
- **Limiting drugs and alcohol:** Abusing drugs and alcohol can lead to risky behavior and therefore might lead to exposure to STIs.
- **Tests:** Getting tested helps protect you and others.

*A doctor can help you find which tests you need.*

*If you need help finding a doctor, please call Member Services at 1-866-899-4828.*

Source: [www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/sexually-transmitted-infections](http://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/sexually-transmitted-infections)

*Always consult your physician before making changes to your lifestyle or healthcare routine. This information is available for free in other languages. Please contact our customer service number at 1-866-899-4828 /TTY/TDD, 1-855-655-5303, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. ET. Esta información está disponible gratis en otras lenguas. Por favor, contacte a nuestro departamento de servicio al cliente al 1-866-899-4828 TTY/TDD 1-855-655-5303 de Lunes a Viernes desde las 8:00 a.m. a 7:00 p.m. Si ou vie resevwa enfomeseyon sa en Kreyol rele nimewo telefon sa 1-866-899-4828 TTY/TDD 1-855-655-5303 Lendi jiska Vandredi de 8:00am a 7:00pm EST.*

# STIs and Pregnancy

STIs can cause all the health problems listed on the previous page and hurt an unborn baby. An STI can cause an infection in the womb after birth. An STI during pregnancy can also cause premature labor and preterm birth. The number one cause of infant death is preterm birth. Preterm birth can also lead to long term health problems and developmental delays for the newborn.

## Can STIs pass from mom to baby?

Yes, an STI can pass from mom to baby.

Below are a few examples:

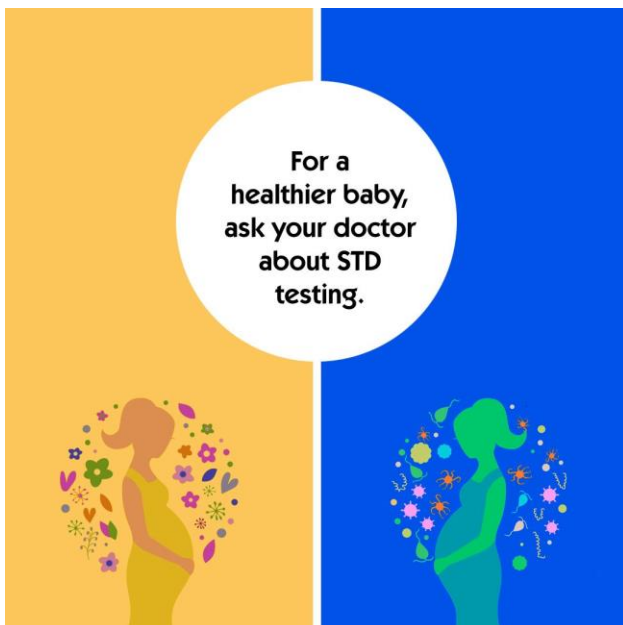
- Syphilis: can cross the placenta and infects the baby in the womb
- Chlamydia and gonorrhea: can infect the baby as the baby is being born through the birth canal
- HIV: can cross the placenta during pregnancy and infect the baby at delivery



## STI effects on baby:

The Office on Women's Health lists the below harmful effects an STI can cause a baby:

- Low birth weight (<5 pounds)
- Eye infection
- Pneumonia
- Infection in the baby's blood
- Brain damage
- Lack of coordination in body movements
- Blindness
- Deafness
- Acute hepatitis
- Meningitis
- Chronic liver disease
- Stillbirth



***With regular prenatal care, you can prevent some of the health problems from an STI. Your OB doctor can test you for STIs throughout your pregnancy as needed. If you are pregnant and need help finding a doctor, please call Member Services at 1-866-899-4828.***

Source: [www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/stis-pregnancy-and-breastfeeding](http://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/stis-pregnancy-and-breastfeeding)

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**SMMC APPROVED**  
**on 02/24/2020 for**  
**Contract Period 2018-2023**

*Marco Waters*

**Marco Waters**

**SMMC Contract Manager**

\*Spanish and other language versions of approved materials are deemed approved provided they are exact translations.

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