

Most sexually transmitted diseases are curable

Health officials answer questions about VD

Q. What serious communicable disease occurs most frequently in the 15-24 age group?

A. Gonorrhea (clap); 70 per cent of the 76,486 cases reported in Texas last year occurred in that age group. Approximately 425 girls are absent from school each day with serious complications from gonorrhea, called "pelvic inflammatory disease" or PID.

Q. How would one know if he/she had gonorrhea?

A. A man usually has a burning pain when urinating, accompanied by a discharge of pus from his penis, about 2-6 days after sexual contact with an infected person. Some men have no obvious symptoms, however.

A woman may have an increased vaginal discharge, but usu-

ally has no symptoms and can unknowingly spread the infection to others. This is also why her infection often progresses into PID.

Q. What may happen if gonorrhea remains untreated?

A. In a man: sterility; possible infection of the prostate gland and testicles; scarring which can obstruct the flow of urine, causing kidney and bladder damage.

In a woman: PID can scar the Fallopian tubes, causing either inability to become pregnant, or "tubal" pregnancy. This type pregnancy is very dangerous because, as the fetus grows, it will rupture the tube, causing massive internal bleeding. Death is a possibility. The ovaries and abdominal cavity can become infected from PID, possibly requiring hospitalization and surgery. Late

complications for both sexes: arthritis, heart complications, blindness, brain damage, tissue and organ damage.

Q. Since women usually have no symptoms, how will a woman know she has the disease?

A. Her male partner with symptoms should refer her immediately to a physician for diagnosis and treatment. If she is sexu-

ally active, she can ask her physician to perform a "gonorrhea culture" test every 3-6 months, or whenever she receives a pelvic examination. The test is painless.

Q. Can the birth control pill and IUD prevent gonorrhea?

A. No. In fact, some authorities believe the pill actually increases the user's susceptibility.

Q. What other venereal or sexually transmitted diseases are there?

A. Syphilis is the other most important venereal disease. A painless sore on or near the genitals will appear, usually 3-4 weeks after exposure. There may be a rash or sore throat a few weeks later. Syphilis, like gonorrhea, is completely curable.

Q. Are there other venereal diseases besides syphilis and gonorrhea?

A. There are several other conditions that may be transmitted during sexual contact. Nonspecific urethritis (NSU) causes symptoms very like those of gonorrhea in men. Some vaginal infections are sexually transmitted. Any pain, itching, discharge, or painless sore on the genital area should be seen immediately by a doctor. Most sexually transmitted diseases are fairly easy to cure.

Q. I have some antibiotics at home; can I treat myself?

A. No. The treatment requires specific antibiotics in specific dosages.

Q. What about genital herpes; is it curable too?

A. Genital herpes, like flu or chicken pox, is caused by a virus, and no specific treatment is available. It

causes painful genital blisters that may recur several times. It is contagious and may be passed to sex partners. In pregnant women, genital herpes increases the risk of defects. There may also be a connection between genital herpes and cervical cancer, which has been infected by periodic tests.

Q. How can one avoid getting their disease?

A. As with any disease, the key to avoiding it lies in informed behavior. Two people who engage in sexual activity only with each other become infected if neither is protected at the beginning of the relationship. Any contact with a penile discharge (sore) is dangerous as these can be transmitted to the throat or rectum. Use of a condom (rubber) can prevent transmission if it is worn throughout the period of sexual contact. Examinations and treatment at public facilities are either free or nominal cost.

Q. Where can one get an examination or treatment?

A. To one's private physician, a local public health department, a "free" clinic, an emergency room service of city/county health departments. Examinations and treatment at public facilities are either free or nominal cost.

Q. What if one is a minor and parents be told?

A. No. By law, all venereal disease cases are confidential. Any age may consent to his/her diagnosis and treatment.

Q. How can one find out about the venereal disease other sexually transmitted diseases?

A. Contact the Texas Department of Health Resources, Venereal Disease Division, 1100 West Street, Austin Texas 78701 (512) 454-3781, Ext. 581. A booklet "VD Answers to Frequently Asked Questions on Venereal Disease." If you are a teacher, or are in the field, contact the VD Division for teaching or medical research or in-service training programs.

Area highway soon to be reconstructed

District Seventeen highway improvement projects in the College Station area are the 1976 State Highway Betterment and Farm Road Improvement Program recently approved by the State and Public Transportation Commission.

District Engineer Joe C. of the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation work in this area include Highway 6 from 4.3 miles College Station south 2.5 miles work will consist of reconstructing the four-lane section near World Speedway. This project is expected to cost \$410,000.

The design and construction of this project will be under the supervision of B.G. Bockman, resident engineer.

Similar programs had been conducted annually until last year because of the financial problems facing the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation. Funds remain short in Texas and many states in the nation because of inflation and diminishing rates of available revenues.

Department officials note that such programs are deferred for long without effects. Types of work include program will provide extra safety, increase traffic convenience and rehabilitation of obsolete sections. Programs are necessary to prevent deterioration of the highway and a resulting decline in travel.

The program provides improvement of a total of 3,180 miles of highways and FM roads, per cent assigned to U.S. State-numbered routes, 35 per cent for FM routes and 3 per cent reserved for later assignment.

In all, the program includes projects in 190 counties of

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