

Health Tips

Students should learn prevention of sexually transmitted diseases

By Scott Thomas
Special to the Battalion
April is sexually transmitted diseases month. Sexually transmitted diseases, or STDs, is a broad term that refers to as many as 20 different sicknesses, all of them transmitted by sex.

STDs are usually transmitted through the exchange of body fluids such as semen, vaginal fluid and blood. STDs also can be given by mothers to their babies. Some STDs, such as herpes, can be transmitted by kissing and caressing or close contact with infected areas.

Anyone who has sex can get a sexually transmitted disease, and millions of college students do. More than 4 million American men and women get chlamydia each year.

Genital herpes effects an estimated 30 million Americans with as many as 500,000 new cases occurring every year.

One million cases of gonorrhea are reported yearly, and genital warts effect at least 3 million American men and women each year. Syphilis was thought to effect more than 100,000 Americans in 1989, and that number is growing.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that more than one million Americans are infected with HIV.

Chlamydia is transmitted when bacteria are passed from one person to another during sex. Symptoms may not be present, but men may see a discharge or feel pain in the stomach or lower abdomen. Chlamydia is treatable. A physician can prescribe pills that kill the bacteria.

Like chlamydia, gonorrhea is transmitted when the bacteria are passed from one person to another during sex.

Women and men may have a discharge from the penis or vagina, and women may experience bleeding between their menstrual periods. Gonorrhea is treatable. A physician can administer a shot or prescribe pills that kill the gonorrhea bacteria.

Genital herpes is transmitted when the virus is passed from one person to another during sex. Early symptoms for males and females include a burning sensation while urinating, pain in the legs or genital area and a discharge from the penis or vagina.

In a few days, small red bumps appear in the genital area. These bumps develop into painful blisters, which eventually heal.

Herpes can be treated with pills or ointments that make the sores less painful. But right now, it can't be cured.

Genital warts are transmitted when the virus is passed from one person to another during sex. Sometimes this disease does not cause any signs that you can see. Visible signs may be noticeable

within three weeks to three months after having sex with someone who is infected. The main signs are small bumpy warts that appear on or near the sex organs. Genital warts can be removed as they appear either by burning, freezing or by the use of liquid treatments that cause warts to fall off. However, like herpes, there is not a cure.

HIV disease is transmitted when a virus is passed from one person to another during sex or when needles are shared during drug use. The virus attacks the body's immune system, leaving it unable to fight off infection.

These infections lead to serious illness and often death. The late stage of HIV disease, in which infections are present, is also known as AIDS. Drugs are available that slow the progress of the

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virus that causes AIDS.

They are also able to fight infections caused by HIV. But right now, there is no cure for HIV or AIDS.

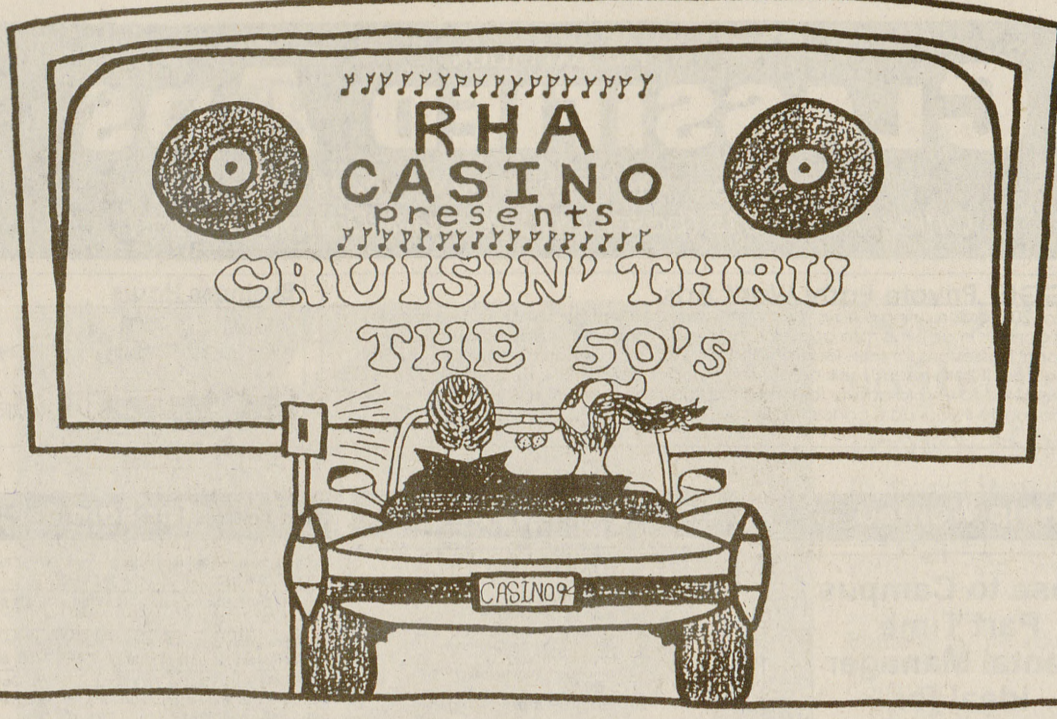
When diagnosed early and dealt with properly, most STDs can be treated. Anyone who thinks he or she may have contracted a sexually transmitted disease should see a physician or visit the health center.

The only full-proof way of remaining STD-free is to abstain from all sexual contact and from drugs. Condoms, used correctly, can greatly reduce the chances of contracting an STD. Clear latex condoms should be used in conjunction with a spermicide and a water-based lubricant such as KY Jelly.

Oil-based lubricants break down latex and should not be used. Having sex with one faithful and uninfected person greatly reduces your chances of getting an STD as well. Your risk increases with the number of sexual partners you have.

The Health 415 class (Health Education Methodology) in conjunction with the A.P. Beutel Health Center will be hosting an STD Awareness Week the week of April 25 through April 29. A table in the MSC will offer information about various STDs.

During the week, a sexual health trivia bowl called "Sex, Lies and STDs" will be ongoing with prizes awarded to the winners.



**April 15th
7 p.m. - 12 a.m.**

**Tickets on sale now
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