

Learning About Sex

Love, Sex & God

A Guide for the Christian Family

young women ages 14 and up

For Discussion or Individual Use

Book 5 of the Learning about Sex Series for Girls

The titles in the series:

Book 1: Why Boys and Girls Are Different

Book 2: Where Do Babies Come From?

Book 3: How You Are Changing

Book 4: Sex and the New You

Book 5: Love, Sex, and God

Book 6: How to Talk Confidently with Your Child about Sex

Acknowledgments

We wish to thank all medical, child development, and family life consultants who have assisted in the development, updating, and revising of the Learning about Sex series.



Copyright © 1982, 1988, 1995, 1998, 2008, 2015
Concordia Publishing House
3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118-3968
1-800-325-3040 • www.cph.org

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of Concordia Publishing House.

From text originally written by Bill Ameiss and Jane Graver
Unless otherwise noted all internal illustrations and photographs © iStock.com

Scripture quotations from the ESV Bible® (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Manufactured in the United States of America

CONTENTS



Foreword	4
Introduction	6
1. Sex and Sexuality	8
2. The Female and Male Sexual Systems	18
3. Sex and Your Health	34
4. The Challenges of Becoming a Woman	44
5. Dating	64
6. Finding Out If Love Is Real	89
7. Marriage: When Two Become One	102
8. When Two Become Three	111
Sexually Transmitted Diseases	126
Glossary	135



Foreword

This book is one of a series of six designed to help parents communicate Christian values to their children in the area of sexuality. *Love, Sex, and God* is the fifth book in the series. It is written especially for young women ages 14 and older and, of course, for the parents, teachers, and other significant adults who are concerned about their healthy development and may want to discuss the book with them.

Like its predecessor, the new Learning about Sex series provides information about the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of human sexuality. Moreover, it does so from a distinctively Christian point of view, in the context of our relationship to the God who created us and redeemed us in Jesus Christ. The series presents sex as another good gift from God, designed by Him for us to share in marriage. It also may help us understand how God's design and gifts of sexuality and marriage fit in the larger context of our entire life of faith. To counter cultural influences, be strong and consistent in communicating the miracle of God's design. The way God made us is just the way He knew it should be for our health and happiness.

Each book in the series is graded—in vocabulary and in the amount of information it provides. It answers the questions that persons at each age level typically ask. Because children vary widely in their growth rates and interest levels, parents and other concerned adults will want to preview each book in the series, directing the child to the next graded book when she is ready for it.

Ideally, this book will be used as part of a biblically based, broadly focused—yet personal—training program to prepare young women for womanhood. For young women, this training can flow from a mentoring relationship. A young woman can learn much from a grandmother, mother, or other Christian adult woman. In the context of such a relationship, questions of a personal nature can be asked and answered, insightful discussions held, and godly behaviors modeled.

Your expression of positive and God-pleasing values will likely have a greater impact on the healthy development of your daughter than any book, other than the Bible. God's plan unfolds as each generation in succession passes on the truths God imparts through His Word and the

wisdom that comes as challenges are met and overcome by the power of God's grace through Jesus.

In addition to reading these books, parents can use them as starting points for casual conversation and when answering other questions children might have. We pray that this will be the beginning of ongoing open, honest, and intentional communication with your child regarding God's magnificent design.

The books in this series also can be used as mini units or as part of another course of study in a Christian school or church setting. Whenever the books are used in a class setting, it is important to let the parents know beforehand, since they have the primary responsibility for the sex education of their children. In a classroom setting, the books in this series are designed to be used with groups separated by their sex. This setting is most conducive to open conversation, encouraging questions that may be difficult to ask if members of the opposite sex are present. As the Christian home and the Christian school and church work together, God's design for marriage and sexuality can be more effectively taught.

It is important to communicate not only accurate information about the way God made us male or female, but especially a sense of wonder and deep appreciation of the beauty of God's marvelous design and purpose, with a sense of respect and responsibility toward all God has given.

The Editors



Introduction

**What does it mean to be made
in the image and likeness of God?**

**What does it take to be a
young woman in today's culture?**

What is God's design for sexuality anyway?

These are some pretty deep questions. Most people never pause to consider these matters. Even if you have, you probably still have some confusion. Sometimes, the Bible seems so clear in its guidance for our lives, and other times, it is pretty hard to understand. Making matters worse, the culture offers some pretty attractive and enticing lies about what sex is all about and what it means to be a young woman in the world today.

As a young Christian woman, you are in the midst of a great deal of change. Not only is your body continuing to mature, but your mental, emotional, and spiritual capacities are growing as well. You are growing more confident, strong, and wise, but you also may struggle with self-doubt, confusion about the world, and a growing sense that there must be more to faith in Jesus Christ than what you learned in Sunday School. Complicating everything is a growing sexual awareness that is both exciting and confusing. Just how are you supposed to put it all together?

The purpose of this book is to explore these and a whole range of related questions and subjects. We draw on the questions, struggles, and experiences of many young women who have grown to be strong Christian women. We'll try to help you use their questions and experiences together with reliable biological information as you work through what it means to be a Christian woman who understands and honors God's design for marriage and sexuality.

The Bible reveals God's plan of salvation to us, the plan that sent Jesus Christ to save us from our sin. The Bible tells us that this forgiveness is ours in Christ. And the Bible describes what God's will is for Christian living as defined by the Ten Commandments. You are old enough now to know that no one can keep the Ten Commandments, but God still demands this of us. This is why we have the great news of forgiveness in

Christ for our failure to live as God wills. For Christians, the Commandments also serve as a guide for godly living. Much of what we will discuss in this book revolves around the Sixth Commandment: “You shall not commit **adultery**.” This commandment is further explained by the Rev. Martin Luther in his Small Catechism of the Christian faith. He states: “We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other” (Explanation of the Sixth Commandment). This commandment and explanation give us a wonderful description of God’s design and will for marriage and sexuality in our lives. God strengthens us through the Holy Spirit to daily acknowledge our sin and to rejoice in the forgiveness Christ won for us. In thanksgiving to God for this, we respond with choices and behaviors that are according to His good will and that serve our neighbor. And for this discussion, your “neighbor” is your future husband.

Is it even
possible to live
according to God’s
standard for
sexual purity?



What do I do
with sexual
temptation?



Sex and Sexuality

1



By God's Design Devotion

Read Ephesians 5:22–33.

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh” (Ephesians 5:31).

“What does God want?” You may ask this question when you are truly wondering about God’s will for your life. At other times, you may ask as a cry of frustration: “What does God *want* from me? Doesn’t He get how hard it is to live up to His standard of sexual purity? Sex is everywhere! What does He expect?”

All young Christian women undergo this struggle. Do you feel that God has set up this standard just to see you fail? That isn’t true. God isn’t out to ruin your fun or to make you miserable. God’s high standard for sex is made just for our benefit. He designed sex to be *within marriage* and *very good*. He gives us marriage so we won’t be lonely; He wants us to live a life filled with joy, companionship, and sexual pleasure. This is marriage by God’s design.

Sin corrupted God’s design for marriage. We have twisted sex and marriage almost beyond recognition—almost, but not quite. Christ loved His people, the Church, enough to die for us. What earthly parallel does God give us for that love? The love between a husband and wife. In marriage, you will recognize Christ’s love for you too. May you be strengthened in Christ’s love as you grow in Him.

Prayer: Jesus, I thank You for loving me and giving Your life to save me from death. Thank You for making men and women to love and care for each other. Give me patience and strength in these years as I discover who I am in You. Amen.

God's Plan for Sex and Our Sexuality

God made man and woman intentionally and in a very personal way. In the Book of Genesis (which means “in the beginning”), we read that we are set apart from the rest of creation. Unlike light, trees, birds, and other creatures, God didn’t say, “Let there be . . . and there was.” God designed us personally, and He designed us for each other.

In Genesis 1–2, the Bible tells us that on the sixth day, after everything else had been created by His Word, God then made man. He “formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature” (Genesis 2:7). When God made all the other creatures, He told them immediately to “be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:22), so they were probably created in pairs that fit together. But at first there was only man, the male. God created everything else and saw that it was good, but He recognized that it was not good for man to be alone. Adam, too, needed a “helper fit for him” (Genesis 2:18). So God made a woman out of the man’s rib and gave her to him, and him to her.

This is it! This is the crucial part of God’s design for humans—He made them man and woman! The female (that’s you) was created for the male so they would fit together into a complete whole. Man needs woman as much as woman needs man. Created for each other, Adam and Eve lived in harmony, in unity, and in close and perfect communication with each other and with God. God designed the perfect companion and helper for man—woman. They were given to each other by God; that is marriage, to be given to another for life!

God also said to them what He said to the rest of His creatures: “Be fruitful and multiply.” That’s where sexuality fits into the picture. Coming together sexually and having children is a beautiful part of God’s design for the happiness and fulfillment of a husband and wife. God gave them sexual organs that fit together so that children could be born of man and woman. He gave them an intimacy in their relationship that is unique to marriage. The Bible calls this the “one flesh” union (Ephesians 5:31). When man and woman come together in marriage, they come together into one flesh. They are no longer two and cannot be separated.

Sex is the physical expression of this one-flesh union. In marriage, God gives emotional completeness, the opportunity to be helper and provider, and physical (sexual) pleasure. Adam and Eve, the first married

man and woman, enjoyed an ideal existence in the Garden of Eden, an existence that received and rejoiced in God's gifts of sex and sexuality.

Sin Enters the Picture



But the complete happiness of our first parents did not last long. Satan tempted them, and rather than resisting, they sinned, placing themselves and all of creation into the devil's firm grasp. Still, God did not abandon those He had created in His image. He called out to Adam and then to Eve, asking them what they had done. Pronouncing punishment, God also included the promise of the Savior.

God identified the pain of childbirth as a consequence of Eve's sin; He also said that she would now resent her place under her husband's authority. He told Adam that the consequence for his sin would be pain and frustration in his physical work. He would also now be burdened with toil, sweat, and worry over his responsibility for Eve, for his children, and for the land and animals. All of this was—and remains—a consequence of human sin. Adam and Eve (and all of us who follow after them) would know disappointment, hardship, and heartache as results of the fall into sin. Sin would contaminate every aspect of their lives, including self-image, personal fulfillment and satisfaction, and relationships with both God and others. Sin now also corrupts our sexual desire and our ability to be faithful in all that we think, say, and do, and our marriages are now infected with selfishness.

God's people do not always follow His plan for their lives perfectly, but isn't it amazing that God receives us into His family in spite of our sin? He does this for Christ's sake, who died on the cross for our forgiveness. God desires that we obey Him—this is how we are to show our love for Him—but He is quick to forgive and restore us when we fall. This forgiveness and restoration is accomplished in and through Christ.

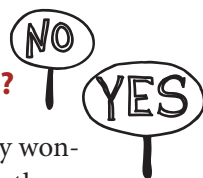
The Bible calls us to be transformed into the likeness of Christ (see 2 Corinthians 3:18). This is only possible when the Holy Spirit lives within us and daily works in us the process of sanctification, strengthening us for good works and holy lives. When Paul writes about living holy lives, including sexual purity, he is not taunting us with some impossible task or trying to lay new burdens on us. He is actually describing the way things were by God's design in Genesis, in the beginning. And with our Baptism into Christ, we are made a new creation and given a newness of

life in Christ, where we have been freed to love Him and others as God designed.

This isn't to say it's easy, but all of life now requires daily recognition of our sin and daily receiving forgiveness from Christ. We live forgiven and now restored by the Holy Spirit, who enables us to live sexually pure lives. What we share together in this book is learning about who we are as Christian women—sinful but redeemed in Christ.

This emphasis on sin, forgiveness, restoration, and new life might seem out of place in a book about sexuality, but then again, maybe understanding these spiritual truths really *can* help us make our way through the challenges of life.

Is Being Male or Female Really That Important?



This may seem like a strange question, but some people really wonder if there is such a big difference. Our culture has been pushing the idea that masculinity and femininity are just social constructs—or, to put it another way, that our sex is created by society's attitudes and has no deeper meaning. In the 1960s and 1970s in America, many women took action to have more opportunities in a male-dominated society and to define new roles and identities. This feminist movement was also heavily influenced by the development of the **birth control** pill. Many women believed that control over when and if they got pregnant meant that women were now equally equipped to do whatever a man could do in the workplace and in matters of sexual activity. Unfortunately, this type of feminist attitude has now been pitting women against men for decades.

The Bible affirms that men and women have equal worth in God's eyes, but it is also clear that we are different by design. It's not just that males and females have different sexual organs—this much is obvious—but that our entire makeup is different. Research shows that men and women process information differently, have different physical strengths and weaknesses, and approach relationships differently. By God's design, male and female were created to *complete* each other, not to be exactly the same.

You began to be a female at the instant of your **conception**. Our sex is a biological fact. Our sex at the DNA level cannot be changed. It's an integral part of who we are as a person . . . who we were created to be.

During an ultrasound or at your birth, your parents joyfully said, “It’s a girl!” From that moment on, everyone treated you as a girl. By age 2, you were watching other females very carefully so you could imitate their femininity in walk, mannerisms, and speech. For as long as you live, you will experience life as a female. Your sex is central to who you are.

Rejoicing in our male and female differences isn’t just a trendy social idea past its prime. For nearly all of human history, these differences have been recognized. They were sometimes celebrated and sometimes abused, but it was still okay for men and women to be different, to have different strengths and weaknesses. The sex blurring we see in culture today is a human twisting of God’s good design.

Broken and Restored

Unfortunately, sin has negatively affected the way we understand ourselves as women and the way we relate to God and our interactions with other women and men. All these relationships are broken by sin. The result is often physical or emotional pain because the way things are now is not God’s original, perfect design for men and women.

We often act harshly toward others, talking and acting disrespectfully to the men and women around us. We shake our fist at God because He won’t condone what we are doing when it gives us pleasure, even if we know it’s wrong. We say it’s okay and that we can do whatever makes us feel good. “God just doesn’t want us to have fun!” we think.

We can cause hurt and discontent when we focus on how others should treat us instead of focusing on how we should treat others. And we have wounds deep inside of us—loneliness, guilt, anger, lust, sorrow—because we make choices that do not show a love for God and a love for the other people in our lives (our neighbors).

A way to describe the situation we are in is *broken*. We are broken people. We’ve been split apart and separated so that we are no longer closely connected to God, to others, or to a right understanding of ourselves. Did you ever wonder why even a Christian as great as Paul struggled to do what he didn’t want to do and didn’t do what he wanted to do? (See Romans 7:14–25.) Sin has broken the harmony and unity between God and us, among us as men and women, and within us as our desires and behaviors often no longer reflect God’s design.

But Jesus came to live, die, and rise again for all human sin. He came to break down the walls of hostility that separate us from God and from one another. He came to restore all that is broken in each of us—male and female. He came to create the “new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” (Colossians 3:10), just like in the beginning.

In a very real sense, Jesus came to fix all that is broken. This is called **reconciliation**. He restores us to a loving relationship with God our Father. He brings forgiveness and grace to marriages and families. He even helps us overcome our selfish desires by the power and fruit of the Holy Spirit, who gives us love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, *faithfulness*, gentleness, and *self-control* (Galatians 5:22–23, emphasis added).

We are broken, but God restores! What a great and wonderful thing to be thankful for and to remember as a young Christian woman!

The Deeper Meaning of Sex and Marriage

The big question for many Christians is not “Should I follow God’s plan for sexual purity?” but “What does God’s design for sex look like?” Another common question, especially for Christian young people, is “How far can I go without sinning?” Does this describe your attitude concerning sex? You want to follow God’s plan for sexuality, but what exactly are the boundaries?

God’s design outlines what your sexual behavior looks like before you are married and what your sexuality is within marriage. Knowing God’s design and its importance will help you embrace it and defend it when challenged.

Marriage Is Important to God

Did you know that in the Bible, the story of God’s people *begins* in Genesis with the marriage of a man and a woman (they are given to each other) and *ends* in the Book of Revelation with the marriage of the Lamb and the Bride at a great marriage banquet? This marriage between the Lamb and the Bride is also known as the marriage between Christ and all His believers (the Church).

What does this mean? God designed marriage to be a sign of Christ and His relationship with the Church. In fact, God uses marriage, faith-

fulness, infidelity, and forgiveness between husband and wife as themes throughout the Bible. Because God designed us as male and female and because we know what marriage is, we get it when God uses “marriage words” to describe Christ and the Church. A husband sacrifices for his



wife. Christ sacrificed His life for His people. We can understand this. A wife loves her husband deeply and desires to please Him. The Church submits to Christ, loving Him, thanking Him for His husbandly care, and looking to Him for all good things. We understand this! God uses every-day things so that we can better understand Him. Get it?

You will find marriage images throughout the Old Testament. God describes the relationship He has with His people in terms of a marriage. He calls Himself the Bridegroom, and Israel His Bride. He laments when Israel strays, just as a husband would weep over an unfaithful wife. One of His prophets, Hosea, is commanded to marry a **prostitute** as an illustration of how God loves us and is faithful to us, even though we are sinful and unfaithful to Him. Why? Because He *is* the faithful husband!

The marriage imagery continues in the New Testament. Not only did Jesus teach about marriage, but He also used marital imagery when speaking to His followers. In Matthew 9:14–16, Jesus said His disciples did not fast because they were with the Bridegroom. By this, Jesus meant that when the Bride is with the Groom, it is a celebration! No fasting is allowed at a celebration. Fasting is like the depriving of pleasure before the marriage feast. But the marriage feast is the giving of pleasure to each other! The boundary is clearly there: outside of marriage is sexual fasting; within marriage is feasting!

Later, Paul wrote about Jesus’ work of *giving Himself up* for the Church in order to make her holy as a Bride for Himself. Again, marriage is the giving of self, not taking; and Christ is the perfect self-sacrificing Groom to His Bride (that’s us)!

If you’ve ever attended a wedding, chances are you heard 1 Corinthians 13:4–8 read as part of the ceremony. In this chapter, Paul compares the love between a husband and a wife to the love Christ has for His Church. Read it for yourself:

“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends” (1 Corinthians 13:4–8).

The passage from 1 Corinthians 13 is used at many weddings because it describes so beautifully what love within marriage looks like. But if you look at Christ through these words, you will hear the real message: Jesus Christ is love, giving Himself up for us on the cross in perfect love to save us and make us holy. Your future marriage will strive to witness to Christ behind these words of love. When you are patient and kind, not selfish or resentful, when you support, encourage, and help your husband in his weaknesses, you are witnessing to the love that Christ first showed you and your future husband. What a joy to love in these terms! “We love because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

How Does Knowing about God’s Design for Marriage Affect My Sexual Desires Now?

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed” (Genesis 2:24–25).

The marriage of Adam and Eve from the beginning has everything to do with love, sex, and marriage for you today as a young Christian woman. God designed us and set the boundary within marriage: “Man shall . . . hold fast to his wife, and they shall be come one flesh.” We are still made according to God’s original design, male and female, capable of becoming one flesh. And because He created us, God desires only what is best for us. He knows our weakness and promises to help us overcome the temptations and sin that are now a part of our lives and our world.

God’s love for us can provide daily guidance as we strive to control our own sexual desires in a sinful world. God is love. His love for us is the best example we have of love.

This love was first shown when He created male and female for each other. It is shown to us today through Jesus, who died for our sins on the cross so that we might be returned to God. God is love in that He created us and redeemed us in Jesus. And He is love in that He gives us

the power through the Holy Spirit to live according to His design and will. Now we can show godly love to others.

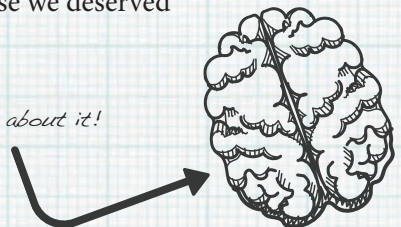
If showing love to others, acting unselfishly, and following God's will regarding waiting until marriage to have sex seem difficult or even impossible at this point, remember that it is not our efforts that give us strength. It is Christ alone, living in us and working through us, that allows us to *daily* conform our desires to God's will. This will require understanding what it means to be a Christian woman in a world often incompatible—even hostile—to the way God designed us to live. This will be difficult to hold on to when faced with the decisions your friends make about their sexuality. This will be a challenge that will require daily help. But your help comes by “looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2). He is stronger than your desires and the ungodly opinions and attitudes of those around you. He is the Almighty One!

Practically speaking, the more you study God's Word, the more you will find strength to lead a sexually pure and decent life. Pray to God for strength also to resist temptation and to exercise self-control over your desires. They are strong. But God is stronger. And if your strength fails, remember His amazing love for you.

Part of growing into a mature, healthy woman is learning to control all this amazing, creative, life-giving sexual energy and to channel it toward your future family. He created these desires within us to be strong so that they would work according to His design. Even with sin in our lives, God can strengthen and guide us on His path for our lives. Sexual desire is a good gift of God that allows us to bond to each other in ways that please Him. By valuing your sexual desire and reserving sexual expression for marriage, you are able to combat the cultural messages that work to cheapen sex. This is truly God-pleasing.

God loves us so much that He gave His only Son to be a sacrifice in our place! Despite humankind's fall into sin, God had mercy on us to make everything right between us—not because we deserved it, but because He loves us so much.

Let's think about it!



Chlamydia

What are the symptoms? (All people may not notice all symptoms.)

Chlamydia is the most commonly reported STD. Approximately 75 percent of women and 50 percent of men with chlamydia have no early symptoms. Symptoms, when they appear, are similar to those of gonorrhea (see above). Men can have a discharge and a burning while urinating. Women can have an abnormal discharge and a burning sensation when urinating.

Chlamydia bacteria can live in the body for years without causing noticeable symptoms. Faithful married couples are often shocked to learn that they both have chlamydia, caused by a sexual episode in one partner's past.

How soon do the first symptoms appear?

Usually 3 weeks after infection. Most people don't experience any symptoms.

What happens if the disease is not treated?

Men: Inflamed urethra and testicles; possible inflammation of rectum; chronic pelvic pain; if untreated, sterility.

Women: Infected urethra and cervix. It may cause infertility, ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy in the fallopian tube), inflammation of the pelvis, or chronic pelvic pain. It can infect newborn babies. Up to 40 percent of women with untreated chlamydia will develop PID, and 1 in 5 women with PID becomes infertile.

How common is chlamydia?

Nearly 3 million people are infected in the United States each year.

Genital Herpes

What are the symptoms? (All people may not notice all symptoms.)

Blisters or small bumps on penis and urethra or cervix, vagina, and vulva that may break and form open, painful sores. Often, the blisters are so small that the person does not realize he or she has the disease and may unknowingly pass it on to others. Many mistake the symptom for a pimple or ingrown hair. There may be pain when urinating. With the first infection, there may also be fever, joint pain, flu-like symptoms, itching, and tingling. Eighty-one percent of people infected are never aware of their condition.

How soon do the first symptoms appear?

Symptoms appear 2–20 days after exposure. They may go away and reappear months later, even if there has been no sexual contact in the meantime. Repeat outbreaks are common.

What happens if the disease is not treated?

The infection may cause birth defects or death for a baby whose mother has herpes. There is strong evidence of a link between genital herpes and cancer of the cervix. Yearly Pap tests are advisable for women.

How common is genital herpes?

Sixteen percent of people ages 14–49—about 1 in 6—have had a genital herpes infection. There are 24 million cases of HSV-1 and 776,000 new cases of HSV-2 in a year.

Human Papillomavirus (HPV; “Genital Warts”)

What are the symptoms?

(All people may not notice all symptoms.)

Symptoms include warts on the genital organs, from the size of a small tick to the size of a cauliflower.

How soon do the first symptoms appear?

It may take a few weeks, or years, before HPV symptoms appear.

What happens if the disease is not treated?

The HPV virus may cause cancers of the **anus**, throat, cervix, vagina, vulva, and penis. Ten thousand women in the United States get cervical cancer each year.

How common is HPV?

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that 14 million Americans are infected with HPV each year and the total number of people infected is over 79 million. It is estimated that nearly all sexually active people *outside of marriage* will be infected with HPV at some point in their lives. A vaccine is available to help prevent the spread of HPV, and it's not wrong for Christians to have the vaccine, but for Christians, abstinence from sex outside of marriage is the God-pleasing method of prevention.

Trichomoniasis

What are the symptoms?

(All people may not notice all symptoms.)

Women: Clear, white, or yellowish-green discharge with a strong odor; pain in pelvic area; soreness or severe itching in vulva.

Men: Most have no symptoms; some will experience a thin, whitish discharge, especially in the morning; tingling, itching sensation in penis.

How soon do the first symptoms appear?

They appear 5–28 days after exposure. Symptoms come and go.

What happens if the disease is not treated?

The tiny parasites that cause “trich” will probably continue to multiply and cause discomfort. There is a link between trichomoniasis and cervical cancer. There is an increased risk of getting or spreading other STDs. Infected women are more likely to have a preterm delivery and a child with low birth weight.

How common is trichomoniasis?

More than 3.7 million people in the U.S. have trichomoniasis. Over 1 million new cases occur each year. Although it is most commonly spread by sexual contact, you can also be infected through contact with damp or moist objects such as towels, wet clothing, and toilet seats.

Other Questions

How can a person tell if she has an STD?

An examination by a doctor is the only way to find out for sure. If you notice any symptoms, see a doctor as soon as possible. An STD is easier to stop if it is diagnosed early and correctly. Do not try to treat yourself with antibiotics or other medicines. Each disease requires a different treatment. In some cases, the disease can be cured; some others cannot be cured, although treatment may be available to treat the symptoms.

There are other possible causes for most of the symptoms. For instance, pain during urination may be caused by a kidney or bladder infection. A discharge from the vagina could be perfectly normal or it could be a yeast infection (not an STD). If you are in doubt, see a doctor. Knowing for sure that you do not have an STD is important for your peace of mind.

Clearly the best approach is to avoid contracting STDs in the first place. For Christians, abstinence from sex outside of marriage is the God-pleasing method of prevention. A husband and wife who remained sexually pure before marriage are sure to share a life free from STDs.

Are you immune to an STD after you have had it?

No. The same person can get it again and again.

How likely am I to get an STD?

Remaining sexually pure, as God designed, certainly is the best prevention. However, it's important to inform yourself about STDs because

- you may need to advise and counsel friends who are less informed;
- it is possible—though unlikely—for a person who is not sexually active to get an STD;
- an untreated STD could destroy not only your life, but also the lives of your spouse and your baby.

Where can I go for help?

Here are some possibilities:

- Your parents. Most parents are loving, supportive, and forgiving when their teenagers come to them with major problems.
- Your family doctor. Be honest with your doctor. Without information only you can give, he or she may not test for an STD as the possible cause of your symptoms.
- A trusted school nurse or school counselor. They will know where you can go for diagnosis and treatment.
- Your pastor, a teacher, youth counselor, or some other trusted adult at your church. Caring about your physical and spiritual health, this individual can guide and help you.
- Your local public health clinic. Look under your city or county name in the phone book. A public clinic is sometimes crowded and impersonal, but you are likely to find caring and competent people there. Public health doctors see so many STD cases that they become experts in their treatment. There will probably be no charge. If you are a minor, be sure to seek your parents' advice and help before taking action.

Glossary

Abortion (a-BOR-shun) The premature termination of a pregnancy.

There are three types:

Voluntary A procedure performed at the request of the pregnant woman.

Spontaneous (“miscarriage”) A natural termination usually due to some abnormal development of the fetus.

Therapeutic A medically recommended procedure prompted by abnormal developments that threaten the life of the mother.

Some common methods of induced abortion:

Aspiration (“suction aspiration,” “suction curettage,” “vacuum aspiration”) A medical procedure in which the cervix is dilated and a long plastic tube connected to a suction device is inserted into the uterus to suction out the fetus and placenta. Used during weeks 6–16 of pregnancy.

D&E (“dilation and extraction”) A medical procedure performed after 21 weeks gestation in which the cervix is dilated and the fetus extracted.

Medical abortion Most common method of abortion, using prescription mifepristone and misoprostol (also known as “RU-486”) in combination, causes embryos to detach from the uterine wall. The woman must be no more than 7 weeks pregnant, with medical care nearby in case of complications.

Menstrual extraction (“regulation”) Extracting the lining of the uterus (normally part of the menstrual process) by a suction technique; normally done within two weeks after a missed menstrual period, before positive diagnosis of pregnancy can be made.

Morning-after pill Prescription drug taken by the woman in a single dosage after sexual intercourse to prevent fertilization of the egg or to prevent implantation of an already fertilized egg. This later use is why this drug is considered an *abortifacient* (to cause an abortion).

RU-486 (Also known by medication names “mifepristone and misoprostol”) Prescription medicine taken by the woman to

detach the embryo from the uterus. Like the morning-after pill, abortifacient RU-486 does not prevent conception. When taken shortly after the first missed menstrual period, RU-486 causes the newly attached embryo to detach from the lining of the uterus and subsequently to slough off with the menstrual flow.

Saline abortion A saline (salt) solution is injected into the woman's uterus, causing abortion to occur. Used only after fourteenth week of pregnancy. This procedure is only rarely done in the United States (less than 1 percent of abortions).

Vacuum curettage After dilation of the cervix, suction is used to empty the uterus. Can be used up to the twelfth week of pregnancy.

Abstinence (AB-stin-ens) Voluntarily avoiding something. In sexual connotation, refraining from sexual activity.

Adolescence (ad-uh-LES-sens) The period of life between puberty and adulthood.

Adultery (a-DULL-ter-ee) Sexual intercourse with a person who is legally married to someone else. The term is often used to describe any sexual intercourse outside of marriage.

AIDS Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. A life-threatening viral disease most commonly transmitted through blood or semen or both, either by sexual contact or by use of dirty needles when "shooting" drugs.

Amnion (AM-nee-on) The thin membrane that forms the sac surrounding the fetus within the uterus. Contains amniotic fluid in which the fetus is immersed for protection against shocks and jolts.

Androgen (AN-dro-jen) A hormone that influences growth and the sex drive in the male. Produces masculine secondary sex characteristics (voice changes, hair growth, etc.).

Androgynous (an-DROJ-e-ness) Genderless, neither having specifically masculine or feminine characteristics.

Anus (AY-nuss) The opening at the base of the buttocks through which solid waste is eliminated from the intestines.

Artificial insemination The medical procedure of injecting semen into the vagina close to the cervix by artificial means; can enable pregnancy in spite of fertility problems.

Birth control See *Contraception*.