



**SAFE SEX**





*Credits:*

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**This booklet will answer a lot of your questions. Read on for more information. In the VD Dictionary you can read about the most common venereal diseases. There is also a section about contraception. The last page has a handy list of important addresses and phone numbers.**

**AIDS and VD are called “sexually transmitted diseases”. We have talked about how people get AIDS and VD, and how you can avoid them. But do you have any idea how many people actually have a sexually transmitted disease? Read on to find the differences between the diseases, how serious they are, and what to do about them.**

## **What is a Sexually Transmitted Disease?**

### **AIDS**

Just everyone knows that AIDS can kill you, and that it has no cure. That is why it's so important to know as much as possible about **preventing** it.

- As of the beginning of 1994, more than 18.000 people have been diagnosed with AIDS in Italy. There are many more people who are infected with the AIDS virus, but who don't show any signs of disease. These people are called “seropositive”, and there are between 80.000 and 100.000 of them in Italy. They all look healthy, and they feel healthy, but they DO carry the AIDS virus and they can infect you if you come in contact with their blood, semen or vaginal fluid.
- You cannot tell from looking at someone if he or she has the AIDS virus. Only a blood-test can show that. To find out if you have the AIDS virus, you will have to give a sample of your blood and let it be looked at in a laboratory. (See page 22/23 for more information about the AIDS test).
- There is no cure for AIDS. There is no vaccine and no medicine against it. The only thing you can do is to take medicine that lessens some of the symptoms and slows the disease. But AIDS doesn't get away, and you NEVER get better.

### **OTHER SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES**

Because AIDS is deadly, it's the disease that people are most afraid of. But other sexually transmitted diseases actually occur more often than AIDS. The most common ones are chlamydia, gonorrhea (the drip), syphilis (chancre), herpes, genital warts, and hepatitis. You have probably already heard about chlamydia. Chlamydia (Klah-MIH-dee-ah) looks like gonorrhea, but it is much more common. It occurs 2 or 3 times more often than gonorrhea does. We don't know exactly how many people in Italy have it, but there are a lot of them. Women (as well as men) often have no symptoms, and most of them don't even know they're infected. This is true not only for chlamydia, but for many other sexually transmitted diseases too. Venereal diseases may have **no** clear symptoms. That's why

it's important to get tested for sexually transmitted diseases, even if you feel perfectly o.k. Most diseases (like syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia) can be easily cured with medicine, if you just catch them early enough. If you don't get treated in time, these diseases can cause serious harm. Chlamydia, for example, can cause infertility, making it impossible to ever have children. Some sexually transmitted diseases can be treated but can't be completely cured. For example, herpes and genital warts will disappear after treatment but may come back later. Why? Because the virus that causes them lives in the blood, where medicine can't reach it. For hepatitis B there is no medicine at all. The only way to try to get rid of it is to stay in bed for a while.


 A red rectangular logo with the words "Safe" and "SEX" in white, stacked vertically.

**YOU CAN GET THE AIDS VIRUS OR VENEREAL DISEASE (VD) BY HAVING UNPROTECTED (UNSAFE) SEX WITH SOMEONE WHO IS INFECTED. HOW DO YOU GET INFECTED? LET'S FIRST TALK ABOUT VD. AS YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED, THE INSIDE OF THE MOUTH, VAGINA, ANUS, AND PENIS IS LINED WITH A SPECIAL SKIN. THIS LINING IS CALLED THE MUCOUS MEMBRANE. BACTERIA AND VIRUSES THAT CAUSE DISEASES (LIKE GONORRHEA OR CHLAMYDIA) LIVE ON THIS LINING. WHEN YOU HAVE UNPROTECTED SEX THEY CAN MOVE FROM ONE PERSON'S MUCOUS MEMBRANE TO THE OTHER PERSON'S. AND THAT'S ALL YOU NEED FOR INFECTION TO TAKE PLACE.**

# How do you get infected?

The mucous membrane is much thinner and more delicate than regular skin, and it gets damaged much more easily. Venereal disease and vaginal or anal intercourse can cause tiny cuts in the membrane. The damage can be so small that you don't even notice it.

## What about AIDS?

The virus that causes AIDS lives in the body fluids of an infected person:

- **Blood** and **sperm** have the highest concentration of the AIDS virus. They are the most infectious of all body fluids.
- **Fluid from the vagina** (discharge) is less dangerous because it contains smaller amounts of the virus.
- **Saliva** (spit), sweat, and tears contain such small amounts of the virus that they are **not** considered dangerous.

The AIDS virus is mostly transmitted by blood and semen. You can get infected if the blood or semen of an infected person enters your body. If the special skin on the inside of the vagina, the penis, the anus or the mouth gets damaged (like from cuts or sores), it is even easier for the AIDS virus to enter your bloodstream. The two easiest ways to get the AIDS virus or VD is through anal sex (butt fucking) and vaginal sex (intercourse). Unless you are using a good condom these are both 'high risk' activities. A good condom, used correctly, can greatly lower your chances of infection.

## SAFE SEX AND UNSAFE SEX *So what can you do that's safe? And what is definitely unsafe? Here's the list of do's and don'ts*

### Unprotected Anal Sex (buttfucking without a condom)

This is the most risky type of intercourse for AIDS and venereal diseases (VD). The lining of the anus is very fragile. Anal intercourse causes damage to the lining, allowing sperm infected with the AIDS or Hepatitis B virus to enter the bloodstream. Other venereal diseases, like gonorrhea and chlamydia can also be transmitted through the mucous membrane. A lot of people think that the only person who can be infected is the one being penetrated (the one who is being fucked). But that's not true. The man who is penetrating can also get AIDS or VD if the head of his penis comes in contact with a virus or bacteria in the other person's body. It's just too risky. Never have unprotected anal sex. You can make it safer by using an extrastrong condom



together with a waterbased lubricant (like *Saugella Jelly* or *Vidermina*). But even with a condom, anal sex is never completely safe, because condoms can break or slide off.

### **Unprotected Vaginal Sex** (Fucking without a condom)

Fucking without a condom puts you at a high risk for getting the AIDS virus. If you already have VD, the chances of you getting infected with the AIDS virus are even greater. And the AIDS virus also lives in menstrual blood. So if you already have the AIDS virus (if you are seropositive), the possibility of passing it on to someone else is much higher while you are having your period. So our advice is pretty clear: always use a condom when fucking.

### **Blow Jobs** (Oral Sex on a Man, Fellatio, Giving head)

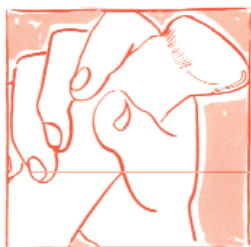


Many women have questions about whether oral sex is safe. The general advice is: as long as you don't get sperm in your mouth, you won't come in contact with the AIDS virus. The problem is that it is difficult to know exactly when a man is going to come. That's why you should use a condom for oral sex. This is especially important if you have sores in your mouth or if your gums bleed. Using a condom will also protect you from other venereal diseases like gonorrhea, chlamydia, and syphilis.

It is almost impossible to get AIDS from licking a man's balls or around his anus. Just look out for scratches or sores (to avoid blood contact). And try to avoid contact with feces (shit). You won't get AIDS from it (unless it contains blood), but you can get nasty intestinal infections and diseases.

### **Cunnilingus** (Oral Sex on a Woman, Licking)

Even if a woman has AIDS, there is only a tiny amount of the virus in her vaginal fluid. So the chances of getting AIDS by 'going down' on her are very slight. But if she is having her period, oral sex is riskier, because contact with her menstrual blood can pass on the AIDS virus. We recommend against going down on a woman just before, during, and after her period. Herpes can also be transmitted by oral sex. Especially if a woman has blisters, sores or scabs on or around her vagina or her mouth (like cold sores), you should avoid going down on her or letting someone go down on you. If you want to be completely safe, use a 'dental dam'. It's made of a little sheet of latex rubber that is held over the lips of the vagina during oral sex. Dental dams are sold in sex shops.



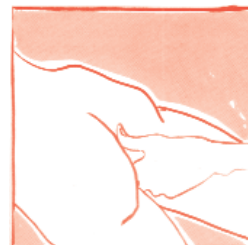
### **Hand Jobs** (Jacking Off, Beating Off)

You can't get AIDS from giving a hand job, because the virus cannot pass through regular skin. If you've got a sore or a blister on your hand, just put a plaster or BandAid over it and you'll be protected.

### **FingerFucking** (in the anus or the vagina)

You also can't get AIDS from fingerfucking (in the vagina) or 'fisting' (in the anus), not even if the whole hand is put in.

As we said before, the virus cannot enter the body through regular skin. Fisting is more hygienic if you use a thin rubber glove. And be sure to use enough waterbased lubricant to keep from damaging the inner lining of the anus while fisting.



### **Golden Showers and Defecation** (Piss and Poop)

Urine (piss) and feces (shit, poop) do not contain the AIDS virus. But the problem is that urine or feces can have tiny amounts of blood from liver or kidney infections or from hemorrhoids. Those invisible drops of blood can expose you to the AIDS virus. Urine and feces (piss and shit) can also transmit other sexually transmitted diseases, like gonorrhea. And they can give you severe intestinal infections. You don't have to worry if you get piss or shit on your hands or your skin, but avoid getting them in your nose, eyes, mouth, vagina or anus. All these areas are lined with delicate skin (the mucous membrane). And don't drink anyone else's piss.

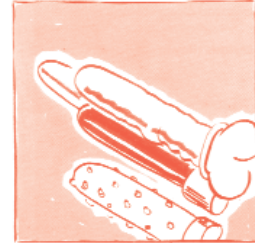


### **S.M. (SadoMasochism)**

Just like with everything else, S.M. can be safe depending on what you do. Make sure not to cause bleeding, because infected blood and sperm can then enter the body more easily. If you get blood on the equipment, wash them with soap and water and then soak them for 10 minutes with 70% alcohol solution (for sale in pharmacies).

### **Sex Toys (Dildos, Vibrators, etc.)**

There is a small chance that sex toys can transmit the AIDS virus if you use them with several different partners. So try to only use your own personal sex toys, and clean them well with water and soap after use. If you share your toys with others, just use them with a condom. If you are using a dildo for anal sex, don't put it in your vagina after it has been in your anus. Because that can transfer bacteria from the anus to the vagina and cause nasty infections.

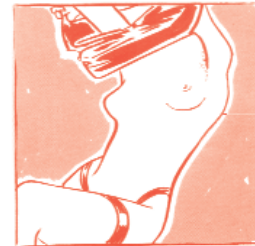


### **Massage**

No problem! Touching and rubbing are completely safe and will not give you AIDS or VD.

### **Erotic Shows or Strip Tease**

Watching is about as safe as you can get! Remember: you can only get a sexually transmitted diseases by having UNSAFE sex.



### **French Kissing (Tongue Kissing)**

There are only tiny amounts of the AIDS virus in saliva (spit). So french kissing will not give you AIDS. But kissing can give you herpes if your partner has cold sores, blisters or scabs on the mouth or lips.

### **Group Sex (Menage a Trois, Trios, Orgies)**

Is group sex risky? That depends on what you do. So read the list over again. And be sure to use a NEW condom each time you have intercourse, and with each different partner. Make sure everybody agrees in advance ... and watch out for cheaters!



## **Other Ways to Get Infected**

Having unsafe sex is the main way to get or pass on the AIDS virus or VD. There are also two other types of transmission:

- Using someone else's needle to shoot up can give you AIDS, hepatitis, and syphilis. How? A used needle often contains a little blood from the other people who used it.

Usually the amount of blood is so small that **you can't even see it**, but it is enough to infect you. So always use clean works (equipment).

- A pregnant women who has AIDS or VD can pass it on to her baby during pregnancy or childbirth. Read more in the section on pregnancy and contraception.

**Remember:** You CANNOT get the AIDS virus or a venereal disease from mosquitos, toilet seats, shaking hands, or sharing cups and dishes. This booklet contains information about ALL the ways you can get the AIDS virus.

If you have more questions about AIDS, you can always call the AIDS Information. Friendly, well informed people are available to answer your questions anonymously. Other helpful phone numbers are listed at the back of this booklet.

Have you ever had a broken condom?

Use this checklist for common mistakes in condom use.

- Was the condom of good quality?
- Did you use the right kind of condom for the kind of sex you were having? (For example, an extra-strong condom for anal sex)
- Did you use enough lubricant?
- Did you use a lubricant made specially for sex (NOT vaseline or oil!)
- Could something have gone wrong while you were putting the condom on? (like tearing it accidentally with your nails or forgetting to keep space for the semen at the top of the condom).

Read on for more reasons why condoms can break. Remember that a condom CAN protect you from the AIDS virus and VD, but only if you have to make sure that you use it properly.

**Safe  
SEX**

# Prevention

## I s T h e B e s t C u r e

### EXTRA TIPS:

- Take your time putting the condom on. Don't rush. Haste makes waste!
- Never use 2 condoms on top of each other. It may seem safer, but it's not. The condoms will rub against each other and slide off more easily. One condom is the safest, and it's all you need.
- Make sure the condom covers the whole penis. Check to see if any sores or warts can be seen above the end of the condom or on the man's balls (scrotum). If there are, you're better off not having intercourse. Remember, it's not only the semen that can transmit disease, contact with sores or warts can infect you too.
- Store condoms in a safe place, protected from sharp objects (not loose in your purse with your nail file!).
- Check the expiration dates on the condom package. Most can be stored for up to 5 years.

### The Condom

A condom is an ultra thin tube made of latex rubber. It is rolled on over a hard penis. It keeps bacteria and viruses from entering your body. It is so thin that men cannot really feel it. If a man doesn't want to use a condom it is probably because he doesn't like the idea of it. The problem is all inside his head.

### Which Condoms are Best?

There are so many to choose from, in all shapes, sizes, and colours. But some condoms are a lot better than others. The ones sold in pharmacies are good. Avoid the extra-thin ones. Avoid condoms sold in supermarkets, they may be too little and of low quality. 'Silhouette' are among the most used in Italy. They've been clinically checked by leakage testing, resistance, and blow testing. And they have passed the strict European requirements for reliability. There are different types of condoms for different kinds of sex. Most condoms are

*You probably know a lot of good ways to put on a condom. But have you ever put it on with your mouth? Give it a try - you can practice on your fingers!*



made for vaginal intercourse. Prelubricated condoms are best. For blow jobs (oral sex), use a non-lubricated condom. Condoms with lubrication don't taste so good and can irritate your mouth. You can buy special flavored condoms for oral sex (but don't use them for intercourse, they're not made for it). For anal sex (buttfucking) use the extrastrong condoms called **Defensor** or **Sicuro**. They're thicker and more lubricated, which you need because anal sex creates a lot of friction. In general, it is best to avoid anal sex as much as possible. Because even extra-strong condoms can sometimes break, slide off, or leak.

### Lubrication

For anal or vaginal sex, a prelubricated condom is better. Intercourse is much more comfortable if you use proper lubrication. A lubricant will also keep the condom from coming off, and lower the chances of it breaking. Most condoms are sold prelubricated. But some of them don't really have enough lubricant. You can buy special waterbased lubricant called **Saugella Jelly** or **Vidermina**. Try experimenting with different amounts of lubricant to see how much feels best. Be careful! Baby oil, massage oil, and vaseline can cause condoms to break. Because they are oil based they can destroy latex rubber. They are not made for sex. So only use the lubricants especially made for sex.

### Vaginal Douches

Douching is NOT necessary for personal hygiene. In fact, it can even be bad for you and cause vaginal infections. Avoid douching if at all possible. If you really want to douche, use Betadine Jodium or Ginegella (sold in pharmacies). And remember that douching will not protect you from AIDS or other VD. If you are douching because you have a lot of discharge or because your discharge smells unusual, you may be ignoring important signs of a sexually transmitted disease. You can't wash VD away. Visit your doctor!

### Working While Menstruating

Working while you have your period can be a hassle. If possible, take a few days off. But not everyone can take time off. Many women use a sponge or a diaphragm to keep from bleeding, don't use cotton. Sponges are the most commonly used. But be careful: sponges can cause infections. So if you do use one, replace it after each customer. And don't leave it in too long. Also be careful when you take it out: sometimes pieces of the sponge can break off and stay behind. They will need to be removed by a doctor. A diaphragm is much better than a sponge. The diaphragm is a soft ring with a rubber dome that you put into your vagina under the cervix. The dome catches and holds back the blood. (For more information on the diaphragm as contraception, see page 24) Sponges and diaphragms are available at the Consultorio Familiare (see the address list at the back). Remember that having intercourse without a condom is extra risky while you are having your period. And don't let anyone go down on you (lick you) while you are menstruating.

### AN EXPERIMENT

**Try putting vaseline or baby oil on a condom. Wait a while and then pull on it. You'll notice that its not much good for safe sex anymore!**

### Putting it on

#### *The right timing and the right way.*

You already know from experience how to put a condom on. But if you have ever had problems or broken condoms, read the cartoon.

## SAFER DRUGS USE

**BLOOD IS DANGEROUS: IT CAN CONTAIN THE AIDS VIRUS.**

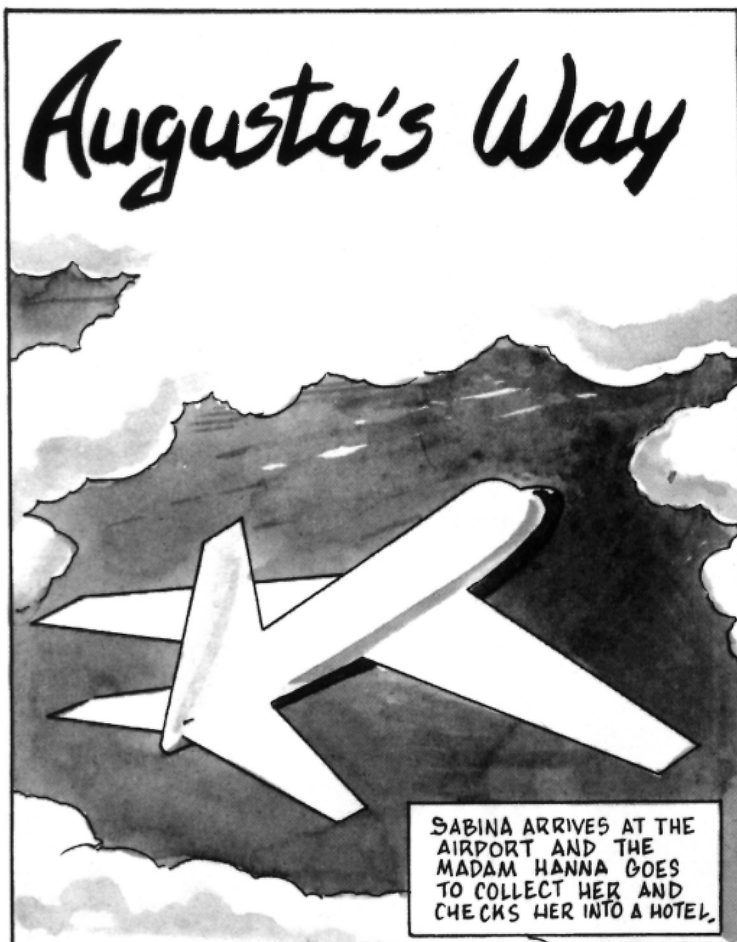
**IF YOU ARE INJECTING DRUGS NEVER SHARE NEEDLES AND SYRINGES WITH OTHER PERSONS.**

**IN AN EMERGENCY RE-USE YOUR OWN NEEDLE, OR BOIL THEM IN WATER FOR 5 MINUTES.**

**YOU CAN ALSO CLEAN THE SYRINGE WITH BLEACH.**

**(FILL UP ONCE WITH WATER AND 2 TIMES WITH BLEACH AND 2 TIMES WITH WATER TO CLEAN OUT THE BLEACH).**









NEXT EVENING ON THE STREET.

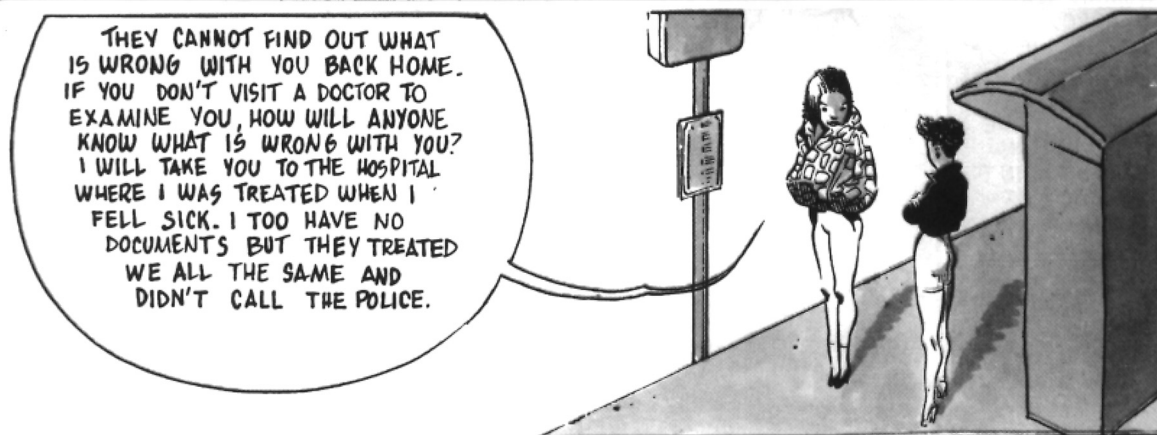
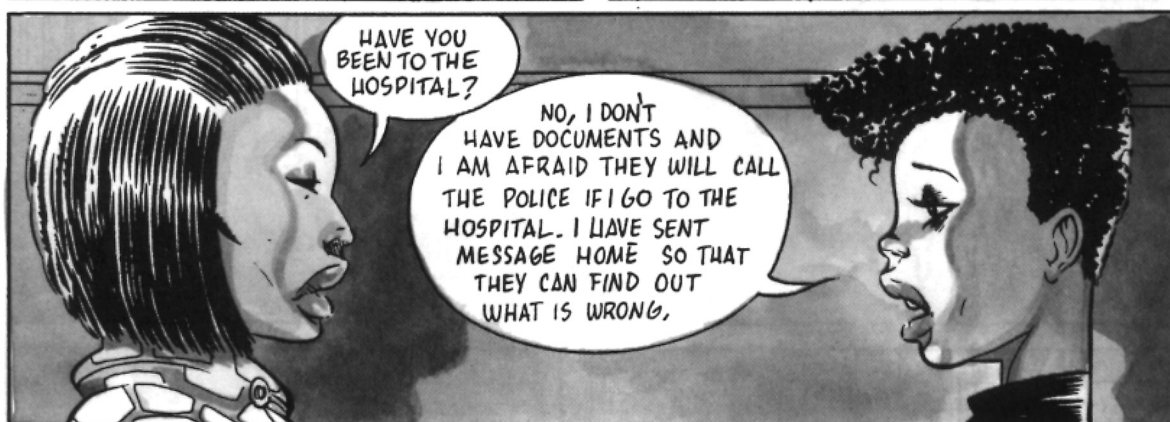


SOON A CLIENT STOPS AND SABINA GOES WITH HIM. LATER SHE COMES BACK.











THE DOCTOR EXAMINES SABINA AND ASKS HER TO DO SOME TESTS, WHEN THE RESULTS COME OUT, THEY DISCOVER THAT SHE HAS SYPHILIS WHICH CAN BE CURED IF TREATED QUICKLY.



DUE TO THE KIND OF JOB YOU DO CAN EASILY CONTACT ALL THAT DISEASE IF YOU ARE NOT CAREFUL. THERE IS A DISEASE LIKE AIDS THAT CANNOT BE CURED AND CAN KILL YOU. OTHER CAN MAKE YOU STERILE IF YOU DON'T TREAT THEM EARLY.

HOW DOES ONE CATCH AIDS?



THE MAJOR WAYS TO CONTACT AIDS ARE.

HAVING SEX WITHOUT USING CONDOM.



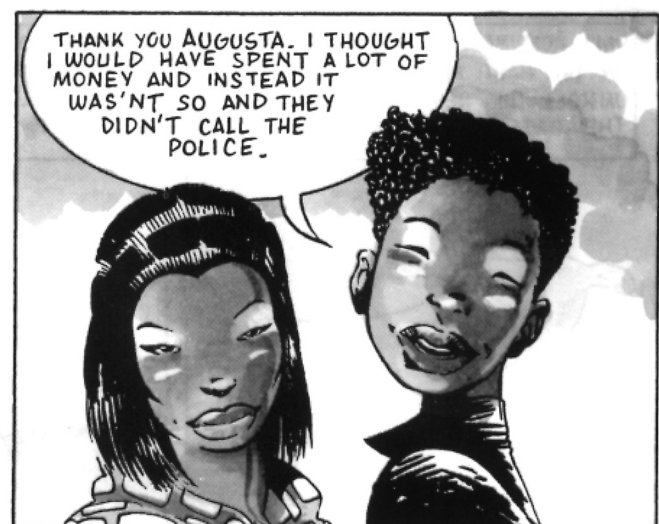
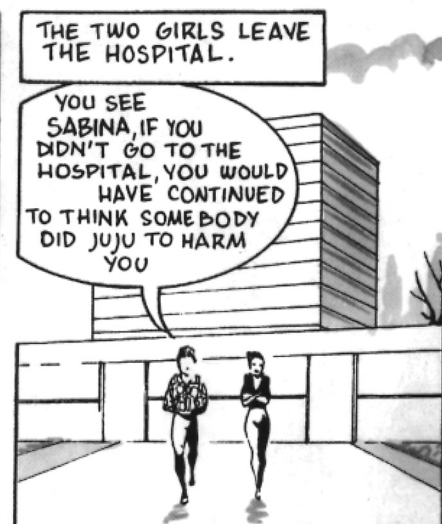
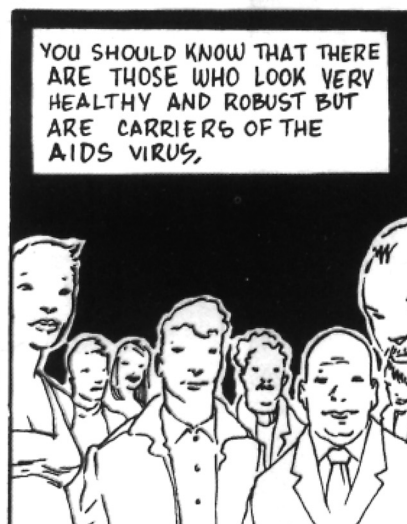
A PREGNANT WOMAN WHO IS SEROPOSITIVE, THAT IS SHE IS A CARRIER OF AIDS, THE VIRUS CAN PASS IT TO THE CHILD SHE IS CARRYING IN THE STOMACH OR DURING DELIVERY.

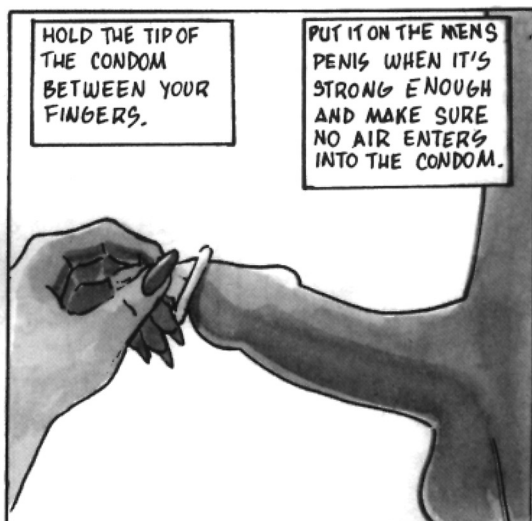


IF YOU USE THE SAME SYRINGE WITH SOMEONE ELSE WHO IS A CARRIER OF HIV OR GET A BLOOD TRANSFUSION FROM AN INFECTED PERSON.

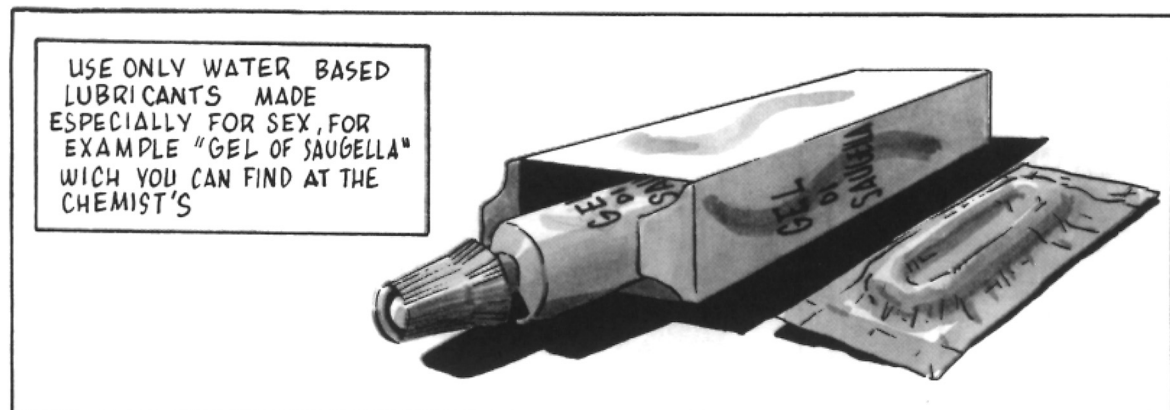
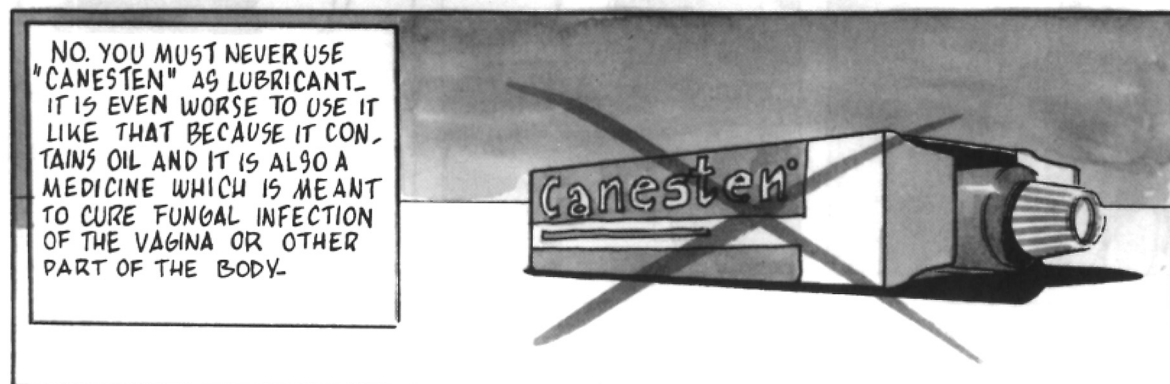
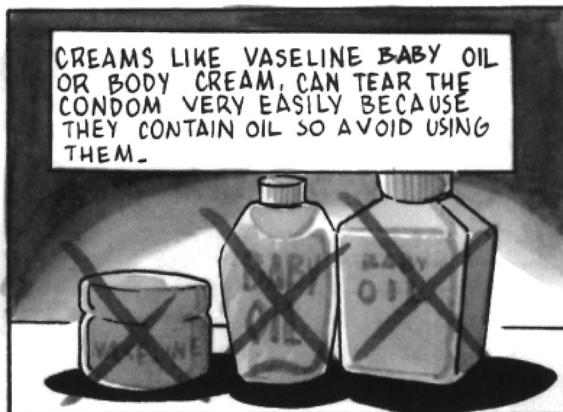


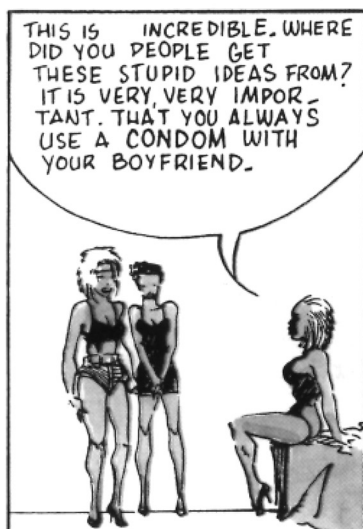
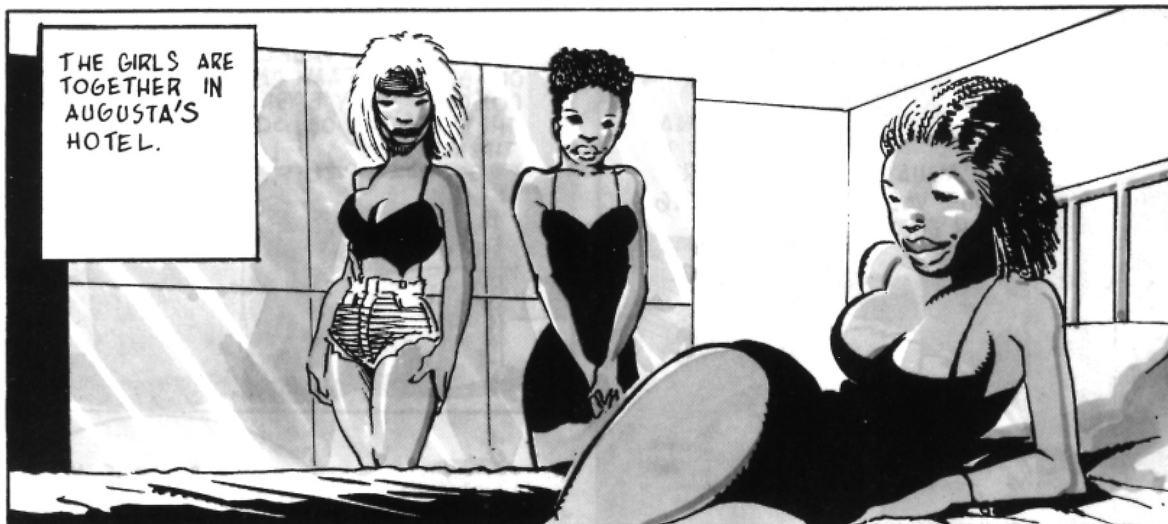
















**TIPS**

# *Tips from co-workers*

We don't have to accept clients who ask sex without condom, even if we have to make money to pay the debt, because we work to have a better condition of life for us and our children and we must care for our health.



**'I tell them I like  
flavored condoms. I say  
that the blow  
job will last  
longer because  
it tastes so  
good'**

**Augusta**

A person can be tested yesterday but, if after the test he had unsafe sex, he could be infected and pass the virus to others.

**When we have problem of unwanted pregnancy we should go to family planning centre (Consultorio Familiare), we should not give money to anybody to do abortion.**  
(read pag. 24)

**We must always go to hospital when we have health problems, we must not take medicines that are not prescribed by a doctor.**

We must not allow cold to enter our bodies; the cold causes a lot of ifness and we must cover ourselves very well when we don't feel well,we should not always think it is juju.

**We don't need documents if we want to go to the addresses at the end of this booklet.**



**No more without  
condom!**

**We must stop fighting  
one against the other.**

**We must be closer to obtain  
a better job condition!**



Sometimes customers use the AIDS test as an excuse not to use a condom. They might say, 'I've just been tested this week for AIDS and I'm clean... I don't have it'. But that means nothing. Because the virus will only show in up in a blood test about 3 months after infection. But in that time the infected person can still pass the virus on to others. Don't believe anybody. A test can't protect you. Only safe sex can.

## The **10** Golden Rules for condom Use:

1. Use a NEW condom each time you have vaginal or anal intercourse.
2. Use a lubricated condom or add lubrication yourself. Use only water-based lubricants like Saugella Gelly or Vidermina. DO NOT use hand cream, body lotion, vaseline, oil or butter.
3. Avoid all contact between the penis and vagina until the condom is on.
4. Open the condom package GENTLY in the middle. Be careful your nails don't damage the condom while opening it or putting it on. *(See the cartoon)*
5. Wait until the penis is completely hard before putting the condom on. *(See the cartoon)*
6. To put a condom on: Hold the tip of the condom between your thumb and forefinger so the air can escape. Leave space at the tip (about 1-2 cm.) to catch the semen. Roll the condom down all the way to the bottom of the penis. *(See the cartoon)*
7. Pull out the penis from your vagina immediately after the man comes (ejaculates). Hold onto the base of the condom while he is pulling out. (if you wait until the penis is soft the condom can slip off or spill sperm).
8. Throw out used condoms in a rubbish bin or waste can. Never flush them down the toilet. *(See the cartoon)*
9. Store condoms at room temperature and out of direct sunlight.
10. Once you have tried home tests on a condom (like blowing it up with air or filling it with water) don't try to use it for safe sex!

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK YOU'VE CAUGHT SOMETHING

If you've got the AIDS virus, you will probably get AIDS, although it might take several years to get sick. Every time you are re exposed to the AIDS virus you increase the chances that you'll come down with AIDS sooner. Each new infection seems to weaken your body's resistance even more. So please don't think that if you're infected you don't have to worry about safe sex anymore! It's twice as important.

Both for others AND to protect yourself, keep practicing safe sex. Not many people know it, but the chances of getting the AIDS virus from someone are much greater if you already have another venereal disease. That's another good reason to get yourself treated for VD as soon as possible. And VD doesn't go away by itself, even if some of the symptoms disappear. So always get treated by a doctor. Only a doctor knows what kind of medicine you need. You shouldn't use medicine that friends or co-workers may offer, or old medicine that you have lying around the house. It's hard to know exactly which VD you've got, since a lot of the symptoms are the same. And NO medication works for all diseases.

**IF YOU'VE GOT A GOOD DOCTOR WHO KNOWS ABOUT YOUR WORK,  
YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD WHY REGULAR TESTING FOR VD IS SO  
IMPORTANT. IF YOU'RE NOT SURE ABOUT WHY OR WHEN TO GET  
TESTED, READ THE FOLLOWING TIPS:**

## Testing for Sexually Transmitted Diseases

You need **regular** checkups for venereal disease. Why?

- Because VD won't go away without treatment.
- Because you often can't tell that you have VD, and the disease can do damage to your body without your knowing it.
- Because if VD is discovered and treated in time its effects are less serious. Most venereal disease can be completely cured.
- Because if you've got VD you have a much greater risk of getting the AIDS virus too.
- Because if your VD is untreated you can spread it to others.

The AIDS test is **not** included in general tests for venereal disease. Why not? Because a positive AIDS test can have serious consequences. Not only for your health, but it could also cause problems with your job. So think it over before you decide to get tested. Talk to your doctor. No matter what the test

results are, whether you are infected or not, safe sex is always absolutely necessary. Just like with other tests, the AIDS test can only be done with your permission. You have to request it yourself. You should also know that in Italy nobody may test your blood without your permission. If your doctor is difficult to talk to, or if you want to change the way you are being treated, call the AIDS Info Line or your local Health Service and ask for the VD clinic or the infectious disease division. They can advise you or refer you to another doctor. You will never have to tell them your name. The phone numbers are listed at the back of the booklet.

### How often should I get tested?

If a condom breaks or comes off during intercourse, you should definitely go in to be tested. If you have any doubts about how safe sexual contact has been, see your doctor or clinic to be sure.

## What happens during a VD examination?

**The Physical Examination** During the physical examination the following things usually happen

- The doctor will use an instrument called a speculum to examine the inside of your vagina and cervix.
- The doctor will wipe a cotton-tipped stick along the inside of your vagina or cervix . This will show whether you have gonorrhea, chlamydia, or trichomonas (look up the definitions in the VD Dictionary). A sample may also be taken from your mouth or anus.
- Sometimes a blood sample is taken to check for syphilis.

### The Results:

Sometimes the doctor can look at the samples under a microscope while you are still in the office. But most samples have to be sent to a laboratory for a more complex evaluation. Then it takes between a few days and a week to get the results back. That's why you sometimes have to phone the doctor back to find out your test results and diagnosis.

### The Results are Confidential:

All doctors and nurses at the Health Service are sworn to secrecy. That means that they cannot pass on information about you without your permission . All information is confidential and is only used by the doctor and the laboratory. No one else will know your personal data, so no one can misuse it. You have the right to look at your own records if you want to. The doctors and nurses may write things down during your visit. These notes are confidential and are only intended to count how many patients the clinic has, and the reason for their visit.

### The AIDS Test (HIV Test):

You can be tested for AIDS by having an HIV-test done. HIV is another name for the AIDS virus. The test should be done at least 3 months after unsafe contact with an infected person. The decision to get an AIDS test is a serious one. If you have doubts about it, or are having trouble making the decision, you should talk it over with someone you trust. Your doctor or nurse or a social worker can outline the advantages and disadvantages for you. You can also call the free AIDS Information. But the final decision is yours alone. And of course, the results of the AIDS test are completely confidential.

### Where Can I Go to Get Tested?

You have a lot of choices. In major cities there are special easy access clinics for sexually transmitted diseases in the hospital. In major cities the Health Service (USL) often has a special VD and HIV or infectious diseases division that can give you more information. Public health nurses are available to help and support you and can find you someone you like and trust to do the test. Addresses and telephone numbers are listed at the end of the booklet.

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## TIPS FOR YOUR VISIT:

- Don't douche before visiting the doctor. That makes it hard for the doctor to see what you might have.
- It's better not to make an appointment while you have your period. It is hard to see how your vagina looks while you are menstruating. Just wait a couple of days before you go to the doctor.
- Be sure to ask questions. There is no such thing as a stupid question. If you have questions later, just phone and ask.
- It's very important to finish up all medicine you are given, even if your symptoms are gone before the pills are. The disease must be completely wiped out of your body, and that takes the whole prescription.

# PREGNANCY AND CONTRACEPTION

**Are you trying to get pregnant? Or would you rather not have children, or at least not yet? It's all up to you. Use a dependable contraceptive. Then you can choose how and when you will get pregnant. And by whom.**

**Spermicides** (creams foam, jelly, and tablets) Spermicides are put into the vagina, where they can kill sperm cells for up to 8 hours. But they don't always kill ALL the sperm. They are only good if used together with a condom or diaphragm.

## The reliable methods

**The Pill** The Pill is made of hormones that keep the egg from maturing. So even if a sperm cell enters your body, it cannot fertilize an egg. The pill is a good protection against pregnancy, but it can't protect you from AIDS or VD. There are different kinds of Pills. Talk to your doctor about the one that is best for you. You can get a prescription from your doctor or from the Consultorio Familiare (see addresses in back). Take the prescription to a pharmacy to get the pills. If you use the pill properly, it is almost 100% certain that you won't get pregnant. Just remember to take it ! If you forget to take the pill one or more days, you will not be protected against getting pregnant. Call your doctor for advice.

**The IUD** The IUD (intrauterine device) looks like a tiny anchor. It is made of plastic wrapped in copper wire. Its primary job is to keep an egg from attaching to the wall of the uterus. The IUD has to be put in by a doctor. It can stay in for at least 5 years. It starts working as soon as it has been put in. But your chances of getting pregnant with the IUD are a little higher than with the Pill. The IUD might also make your menstruation more painful and heavier than before. And the IUD increases the chances of spreading infection from VD. So if you have multiple sex partners you shouldn't use it, unless you are ALWAYS having safe sex. If you are using an IUD, you need a condom to protect you against AIDS and VD.

**The Diaphragm** A diaphragm is a thin rubber dome that blocks sperm cells from entering the uterus. You have to put the diaphragm in before having sex. Both sides of the diaphragm should be spread with spermicide. After having intercourse you have to leave the diaphragm in for 8 hours.

If you use the diaphragm with spermicide, and you have the right size, it is a pretty good form of contraception. But it's not as reliable as the Pill, or the IUD. Just like for the other kinds of contraception, the diaphragm can only protect against pregnancy, not against AIDS or other VD. The sperm can still enter your vagina, it just can't go any further.

**The Condom** The condom can keep you from getting pregnant because it keeps the sperm from entering your vagina. Things can always go wrong if the condom breaks, leaks or slips off. So use a condom together with spermicides. Condoms are best at protecting you from VD and AIDS. So use a condom with either the pill, the IUD or a diaphragm.

## What to do if something goes wrong

- If you haven't used any contraception, or if something has gone wrong (like a condom breaking or slipping off), you need to do something. The different possibilities are described below. And the sooner you act, the better.
- Up to 2 days after it happens you can get a prescription for a "Morning-After" pill. Ask your doctor or go to the Consultorio Familiare.

If you don't get your period on time, it could mean that you are pregnant. Go to the Consultorio Familiare and ask to take a pregnancy test (tests sold in pharmacies are not valid for abortion).

- If your period is more than 16 days late you may choose to have an abortion. It is better to have it performed within 6 weeks of your missed period. It cannot be done more than 90 days later. If you decide to have the abortion, you must get a certificate by a doctor requiring the abortion, and, after 7 days from the date of the certificate, you can go to hospital for the abortion.

## Who pays for it?

Abortion is free for anybody having the tessera sanitaria (National Health Service card). If you are not entitled to the national health service, you have to pay one day hospitalization (about 600.000). In Italy abortion is legal only if performed in hospital. Don't pay for illegal abortion!

## What if I want to get pregnant?

If you want to get pregnant you should remember that a mother can pass on AIDS and VD to her baby. It can happen either during pregnancy or delivery (giving birth). Having safe sex will protect you and your baby. Before getting pregnant, get tested for VD and AIDS.

*You can learn more about the different kinds of sexually transmitted diseases in the VD Dictionary. At the back of the booklet are telephone numbers you can call if you have more questions. Don't be afraid to call and ask.*

# THE VD DICTIONARY

*This is a list of the ten most common sexually transmitted diseases in Italy*

## VENEREAL DISEASES CAUSED BY BACTERIA

**Bacteria are too small to be seen with the naked eye. They can reproduce on the soft inner lining of the vagina, penis, anus, and mouth. The VDs caused by a bacteria are chlamydia, gonorrhea (the drip), and syphilis. They can all be cured if treated by a doctor.**

**Chlamydia** Chlamydia looks like gonorrhea but it is much more common. The chlamydia bacteria are found in the inner lining of the penis, vagina, and anus. Where you get infected depends on what kind of sex you have had. Often women don't even notice that they have chlamydia. Or they only notice a little extra discharge, a heavier period, or light cramping. And you usually can't see any signs, even though it can still be passed. If chlamydia is not treated in time, the infection can spread further, causing 'pelvic inflammatory disease'. Treatment at this stage will cure you, but if you don't see a doctor you could become infertile (unable to have children). You might also have an ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy outside the uterus). This is a very serious, life-threatening situation. You will feel extreme pain in your lower belly, and you should go immediately to the nearest hospital. Obviously it's better to cure chlamydia as early as possible. If you have had unsafe sex, go to your doctor or clinic for a urine test and a sample of the inside of your cervix.

**Gonorrhea** (The Drip, The Clap) Gonorrhea is caused by the bacteria 'gonococ'. It can live on the soft skin that lines the throat, vagina, penis, and anus. Where you get infected depends on the kind of sex you have had with an infected partner. Women don't usually have any symptoms, they show up 2 days to 2 weeks after infection. The main symptoms are milky discharge from the penis and pain when peeing. But, like women, sometimes men don't notice that they are infected. And whether or not there are any symptoms you can get or pass on gonorrhea by any unsafe contact (like oral sex or intercourse without a condom). Gonorrhea won't go away by itself. Infection can spread to the uterus and oviducts causing swelling (inflammation), and fever or pain in your lower belly. Immediate treatment will cure you.

**Syphilis** The syphilis bacteria lives on the inner lining of the mouth, vagina, penis, and anus. In time it can also enter the bloodstream and spread throughout the body. There are three phases of syphilis. The first phase is easy to cure. Between 2 and 12 weeks after sex with an infected partner sores will show up at the place where you had contact (like the mouth, vagina, penis, or anus). The sores are small, hard, and usually painless. You can't always see them, especially if they are hidden inside the vagina or anus. And although the sores go away, the bacteria stays in your body. After a while the second phase will start. You may feel feverish, or start losing hair, or see spots on your skin. All those signs go away in time. Years later, the third phase begins. Your internal organs stop working, and you may even become paralyzed or insane. In Italy, people are cured before they get to that stage. But to get cured, you have to see a doctor and keep getting regular tests for syphilis.

## VENEREAL DISEASES CAUSED BY A VIRUS

**AIDS** AIDS is a disease which damages your body's natural immune system. Normally, the immune system provides resistance against infection and illness. But the AIDS virus breaks that resistance down and allows all kinds of infections to take over your body. People with AIDS most often get lung and intestinal infections and certain kinds of cancer. AIDS is a very serious disease. It is now believed that more than half of the people who are infected with the AIDS virus will die from AIDS. Fortunately we now know how people get infected and how you can protect yourself against it. The AIDS virus lives in semen, blood and vaginal fluid. You can only get infected if the virus ENTERS your body. This can happen during unsafe sex, especially from having anal or vaginal intercourse without a condom. Oral sex (giving head or getting licked) is less risky. Just make sure you don't get any semen in your mouth. And don't let someone lick you if you are menstruating. It's easy to keep semen from entering your body...just use a condom. And if you shoot drugs, don't share needles. It is very important to understand that you cannot SEE if someone has the AIDS virus. Most people who have the virus are not sick yet and have no signs of the disease. We call these people 'seropositive'. It

means that they carry the virus and that they can infect other people. But they still feel healthy and they may not actually get sick for months or years. When they do get sick, they usually get several symptoms: fatigue, night sweats, fever, extreme weight loss, chronic diarrhea, shortness of breath. A doctor may diagnose someone with AIDS if they have serious lung, intestinal, or brain infections, or certain forms of cancer, insanity (dementia), and extreme weight loss. The only way to know if someone has the AIDS virus is to do a blood test. It can take at least 3 months for the virus to show up in your blood. Test results usually take 2 weeks. There is NO cure for AIDS. There is also NO medicine that can protect you from getting it. Medicine can only slow down the progression of the disease. The only protection is safe sex and not sharing needles.

### Genital Warts

Genital warts are found around sex organs. Women get them on or around the vagina. Men get them on or near the penis. Both sexes can get them on or in the anus. You can get infected by having unprotected sex with someone who has the warts. It can take 2 weeks to 8 months before small painless warts will show up. They will not go away by themselves. They can only be treated by a doctor who will give you anesthesia and then use chemicals to freeze, burn, or cut the warts off. Unfortunately, the warts sometime come back and the treatment has to be repeated. Women who have had genital warts often have an irregular test (P smear) for uterine cancer. So doctors usually recommend that you get a Pap smear once a year, just to be sure.

### Hepatitis

Hepatitis is a viral infection which affects the liver. The virus lives in blood, saliva, sperm, and vaginal fluid. Blood is the most infectious. You can get infected if your blood comes into contact with blood containing the hepatitis virus. Most hepatitis infections come from using infected needles and syringes.

Not everyone who has hepatitis has visible signs. It takes 2 to 6 months before symptoms show up. Then you get tired, sick to your stomach (nauseous), and you have stomach aches. You might even get jaundice which makes your skin and the whites of your eyes turn yellow. Your pee (urine) gets very dark, like the color of old tea. They become 'carriers' of the virus. So even though their symptoms are gone, they can still infect other people with hepatitis.

**Hepatitis is the ONLY kind of VD that you can be vaccinated against. A couple of shots (injections) will make you immune. Ask your doctor about it.**

### Herpes

The herpes virus causes blisters that turn into sores and scabs. The most common kind is a "cold sore" in your mouth or on your lips. You can also find herpes on sex organs. Women get them on or around the vagina and anus. Men get them on the penis and anus. Herpes is transmitted by sexual contact (intercourse, oral sex, and kissing). You can also transmit cold sores on the mouth to sex organs and vice versa. Symptoms go away after 2 to 3 weeks. Which doesn't mean that the virus is gone. Most symptoms come back again later, usually if your resistance is low from being overtired, stressed. There is NO cure for herpes. The virus cannot be killed. See your doctor if you have sores or scabs. They might be signs of herpes or another kind of VD, like syphilis.

## VENEREAL PROBLEMS CAUSED BY PARASITES

**Parasites are tiny animals that feed on blood. The most common are lice and crabs. Venereal diseases caused by parasites are all curable with proper treatment.**

### Pubic lice

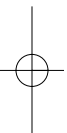
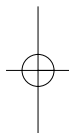
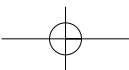
Pubic lice cause itching, usually in the pubic hair around the vagina and anus. The lice are grey-brown in color and are very small and difficult to see. They feed on blood and their excretion (shit) may show up in your underwear as red or brown spots. Lice eggs are grey or beige. Buy Mom- or Cruz-verde powder at the pharmacy and follow the instructions exactly. And wash your clothes, sheets, and towels to kill the lice and eggs.

### Crabs (scabies)

Crabs cause itching over your whole body. The itching usually gets worse when you lay in bed. You get crabs by having sex with an infected person, or by contact with that person's sheets, towels, or clothing. The female crabs dig in under the skin and lay their eggs. You can sometimes see the lines they dig between your fingers or on the wrist. Symptoms show up about 3 weeks after infection. Crabs will not go away by themselves, so you need to visit a doctor.

### Trichomonas

The trichomonas (a one-celled organism) lives on the soft inner skin that lines the genitals. It causes swelling (inflammation). Women have symptoms more often than men do. Usually they get a vaginal infection with foamy, smelly, yellowgreen discharge. The inner lips of the vagina are often red, swollen, itchy and painful. The urinary tract can also get infected, causing pain when you pee, or making you pee a little bit at a time. The symptoms can be so mild that you don't notice them. You get trichomonas by having sex with an infected person. It won't go away by itself. you will need treatment and your sex partner too. See the doctor.





# TAMPEP

TRANSNATIONAL AIDS/STD PREVENTION AMONG MIGRANT PROSTITUTES IN EUROPE/PROJECT

**In The Netherlands:**

The special STD clinic of the municipal health department ("GG&GD, infectieziektenbestrijding").

There are more than 60

GG&GD's in The Netherlands where you can get confidential advice and information on STD, including AIDS.

At some of them you can also get an anonymous STD and AIDS test. Look up the telephone number under "G" for "Geslachtsziekten" (STD) or "G" for GG&GD in the nearest large city.

For advice on family planning etc.: "R" for "Rutgersstichting".

***Are You Traveling?  
Fin Your Health  
Services***

**In Germany:**

The special STD clinics of the Municipal Health Department ("Gesundheitsamt, Beratungsstelle für Geschlechtskrankheiten").

For test and advice on STD and AIDS. Look in the telephone book under "G" for Gesundheitsamt for family planning look for "P" for Pro Familia.

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