Facilitator Guide for Teachers and Educators

Human Development and Sexual Health: Sexually Transmitted and/or Blood Borne Infections (Grades 9-12)

Introduction
This module provides educators who teach students in grades 9-12 with a lesson on sexually transmitted and/or blood borne infections (STBBIs). The module supports the learning objectives of The Health & Physical Education Ontario Curriculum.

Learning objectives
By the end of this presentation students will be able to better understand:

- Bacterial and viral STBBIs
- STBBI signs and symptoms
- STBBI testing

Purpose
Improving and protecting the health and well-being of school-aged children and youth is a priority for Ontario’s public health sector. Childhood is a time when health practices and behaviours are learned, and adolescence is a period when both positive health behaviours and risk behaviours can be adopted. Because curriculum for the school year may be delivered at various times by different educators, this guide allows the educator to deliver self-paced content related to human development and sexual health in the classroom at their convenience. Depending on the level of discussion, student engagement, and the preferences of the educator, the length of this presentation can vary from approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Please ensure familiarization of the content prior to teaching to ensure there is sufficient time within classroom hours.
Facilitator Guide – Sexually Transmitted and/or Blood Borne Infections (Grades 9-12)

About this guide
This guide is intended as a supplemental resource for educators who choose to deliver the health modules developed by Ottawa Public Health (OPH). As content is updated annually and/or when new evidence emerges, we encourage educators to frequently check back on the School Health Online webpage to access the most up-to-date content.

Additional resources
For more information on sexual health, available services and resources please visit the following:

- School Health Online
- OPH - Sexual Health
- The Link Ottawa

Disclaimer
The information provided is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Educators should encourage students to consult their parents or guardians, and/or qualified healthcare professionals for personal guidance related to sexual health. Educators should approach questions about sexual health with sensitivity, respect, and an understanding of the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of their students. When responding to a student question, the response should be adapted to reflect the age and maturity of the student as well as the classroom environment and individual school policies.

Considerations
Becoming informed about a topic prior to discussing it in a classroom setting, will help create a productive and comfortable conversation with youth. This module includes topics that some students may find uncomfortable and/or difficult to understand. Here are some considerations to support the students’ learning experience:

- Be sensitive to different backgrounds and experiences.
As much as possible, be aware of experiences in your students’ lives that may make certain discussions uncomfortable for them. Consider letting students know ahead of time that the topic will be discussed in class and use proper judgment if accommodations are needed.

- Watch for signs of discomfort.
  - Monitor students’ faces and body language.
- Allow ample time for discussion.
  - Allow enough time to introduce the topic, discuss as a group, summarize, and answer questions.
  - Using an anonymous “question box” may encourage students to ask questions they otherwise would not feel comfortable asking in front of the class.

**Continued collaboration**

Our commitment to improving health outcomes is an ongoing journey*. We encourage you to share feedback and suggestions for improvement on this module, using our feedback form found on our [School Health Online](https://www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/SchoolHealthOnline) webpage. Together, we can continuously refine our resources to better the evolving needs of our school communities.

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Module

Please use as suggestions only:
Prior to beginning this module, it can be helpful to include a statement such as: "I know this can be a sensitive topic and can make people feel uncomfortable." Let your students know that you are not uncomfortable, and that this is such an important topic to start talking about even before youth may have started thinking about sexuality. Reinforce that this is a safe space where students can learn about their bodies and health to be better able to make informed decisions for themselves.

Ground rules: Review classroom etiquette or establish ground rules together as a group, prior to this lesson.

Some examples:
- Refraining from discussing personal situations or stories; however, students are encouraged to speak to their teacher privately if they would like to discuss a topic further.
- Respecting all beliefs and cultural values.
  - Cultural sensitivity: People’s decisions and behaviours related to sexual relations are influenced by their cultural beliefs, values and practices. It is important to acknowledge our own personal cultural values and beliefs while respecting that others may not share the same ones.
- Using inclusive language and proper terminology.
- Welcoming all questions.
- Listening attentively.
- Helping create a safe space for students – an environment of respect and sensitivity.
- Keeping classroom discussions confidential.
Let students know that support on sensitive topics is always available within the school community and through external partnerships. Supports are reviewed at the end of the presentation.

**Inclusive language**: Inclusive language is used to include individuals of all genders and sexual orientation. Using inclusive language provides a safe space for students, as well as a respectful, caring and welcoming environment. It is also important to note and share with students that during the lessons, when the female and male anatomy are discussed, they are discussed from a biological standpoint meaning sex assignment at birth. However, it is important to point out to students that for some people, their assigned sex does not match their gender expression and experience and that is okay. The information outlined in this presentation is intended to educate students on the functions of the human body and provide them with valuable knowledge to make healthy and safe choices in their lives.

**Note to educator**: When talking about body parts, emphasize physiology instead of gender. Referring to “bodies with a penis and testicles” or “bodies with a vulva and ovaries” is more accurate and inclusive than referring to boys or girls. It may be useful to show diagrams of the external genitals if students do not know the words “vulva” or “penis”. For example, rather than saying “Girls will go through menstruation”, educators could refer to a diagram of the reproductive system and explain that “For those who have ovaries, menstruation usually begins between the ages of 8-18”.

For more information on teaching in a gender inclusive way, refer to the “Principles of Gender Inclusive Puberty and Health Education”.

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| OttawaPublicHealth.ca/SchoolHealthOnline | SantePubliqueOttawa.ca/SanteScolaireEnLigne | 5 |
Sexually Transmitted and/or Blood Borne Infections (STBBIs) can pass from one person to another through genital contact, blood and/or other bodily fluids during sexual contact. Students may be familiar with the term, "STI" Sexually Transmitted Infection, which was the former term. This was changed as some of the same infections can spread through contact with contaminated blood, not just through sexual contact.

Discussion for class:

- STBBIs are contagious and can be transmitted through sexual contact or through non-sexual contact, for example: sharing of drug use equipment (infected needle).
- Just because someone has had an STBBI before doesn't mean they won't get one again.
- Individuals can be re-infected before their treatment is complete, or if their partners are untreated.
- An infected mother can pass an STBBI to her baby during a vaginal birth.
- Some STBBIs can be transmitted by skin-to-skin contact, for example: Herpes and HPV.
- It is important to note that STBBIs can also be spread through oral sex.
- If someone becomes sexually active, both partners should get tested to make sure neither of them have an STBBI.

Testing options will be discussed in later slides.
### Slide 4

**Sexual contact**

Any contact with the vulva, clitoris, vagina, anus, penis or testicles between two or more people.

**Examples:**
- Skin → genitals
- Mouth → genitals (oral sex)
- Penetration (vaginal or anal)

This slide provides a definition of sexual contact and includes sexual contact examples that can put an individual at risk of obtaining a STBBI.

### Slide 5

**STBBI Signs & Symptoms**

Many STBBIs have **no symptoms**.

This is why it is so important to **always get tested**!

Many STBBIs have no symptoms and those that present symptoms may vary among individuals.

People may not always know if they have an STBBI. This highlights the importance of always getting tested and making sure their partner does too.

Untreated infections may cause permanent damage to the fallopian tubes, uterus, and surrounding tissues, which can lead to infertility.
There are two different types of STBBIs – **Bacterial** and **Viral**.

**What are bacterial infections?**
Bacterial STBBIs are caused by bacteria passed from person-to-person during sexual activity.

**Bacterial infections can be cured using medications.**
Let’s look at a non-STBBI example to aid with learning: Strep throat
- Treatment: Antibiotics

**What are viral infections?**
Viral STBBIs are caused by viruses being passed from person to person during sexual activity or through contact with contaminated blood.

**Viruses can be treated and managed but there isn’t always a cure.**
Let's look at a non-STBBI example to aid with learning: Having a cold
- Can be treated and managed: Rest, liquids, medication such as anti-virals if needed (no antibiotics as antibiotics only treat bacterial infections). Reoccurring outbreaks can be experienced.
- Vaccinations against viruses are available and can prevent some viral infections. Vaccinations that students may be familiar with will be discussed in the upcoming slides.

**Suggested activity:** Before moving on to the next slide, ask students to name any STBBI they think they might know.
### Slide 7

**Chlamydia**

**Bacterial**

- Most common bacterial STI
- Transmitted during unprotected oral, vaginal or anal sex with an infected partner
- Easily treated and cured with antibiotics
- Many people do not experience any symptoms

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**What is chlamydia?**

Chlamydia is caused by a bacteria called *Chlamydia trachomatis*. It is the most common bacterial STI.

**How is it transmitted?**

Chlamydia is transmitted during unprotected oral, vaginal, or anal sex with an infected partner.

**What are the symptoms?**

Most people do not experience any symptoms. This means someone can transmit the infection without knowing they have it. Testing is the only way to know if someone has chlamydia.

- A change in vaginal discharge
- Burning with urination
- Lower abdominal pain
- Pain during intercourse
- Bleeding after sex or other abnormal vaginal bleeding
- Rectal pain or discharge
- Watery or milky discharge from the penis
- Burning or itching around the tip of the penis
- Pain or swelling in the testes

**How does someone get tested?**

- A urine test can detect an infection in the genital area.
- A health care provider may collect a swab from the cervix, urethra, throat or rectum.

**How is it treated?**

Chlamydia can be easily treated and cured with antibiotics.
What is gonorrhea?
Gonorrhea is caused by a bacteria called Neisseria gonorrhea. It is the second most common bacterial STI.

How is it transmitted?
Gonorrhea is transmitted through unprotected vaginal, anal and/or oral sex with an infected partner. A person can pass it on without even knowing that they are infected.

What are the symptoms?
Many people do not experience symptoms of gonorrhea.
- Thick yellowish vaginal, penile and/or rectal discharge
- Burning with urination
- Lower abdominal pain
- Vaginal pain and/or bleeding during intercourse
- Abnormal vaginal bleeding
- Rectal pain and/or discharge
- Sore throat
- Burning and/or itching around tip or inside of the penis or around the anus
- Pain and/or swelling in the testes

How does someone get tested?
A swab may be taken from the cervix, urethra, throat and/or rectum. A urine test may also be done. Testing is the only way to know if someone has gonorrhea.

How is it treated?
Gonorrhea can be easily treated and cured with antibiotics.
## What is syphilis?
Syphilis is caused by a bacteria called Treponema pallidum. Syphilis infection has four stages with different symptoms at each stage. It is common that a person who has syphilis will not notice any symptoms. If syphilis is not treated, it can lead to serious health problems over time.

## How is syphilis transmitted?
- Through direct sexual contact (oral, genital, anal) or close physical contact with a contagious lesion or rash.
- To an unborn baby during pregnancy or delivery.

## What are the symptoms of syphilis?

### Primary Stage
- Painless lesion(s) or sore(s) close to or inside the mouth, genitals (penis or vagina), and/or anus and rectum. These may or may not be noticeable.
- Swollen lymph nodes.

### Secondary Stage
- A rash on one or more area(s) of the body, including stomach, extremities, palms of the hands, soles of the feet.
- Raised lesions or white patches in the mouth, genitals, or anal regions.
- Swollen lymph nodes.
- Flu-like symptoms (headache, muscle and joint pain, loss of appetite, fever).
- Patchy hair loss.

### Early Latent Stage
- No signs or symptoms, but the infection can still be transmitted to sexual partners.

### Late Latent Stage
- After a period of 1-2 years, if syphilis has not been treated it can progress to a late latent stage. During this phase symptoms will not be present. The infection cannot be...
transmitted, but it can still affect a person’s health. Left untreated, syphilis can damage the heart, liver, brain, bones, or eyes.

Neurosyphilis
- Neurosyphilis can occur at any time after the initial infection.
- Symptoms of neurosyphilis can include changes to vision or hearing, severe headache and/or stiff neck, confusion, nausea, or vomiting.
- A neurological examination is performed to assess for neurosyphilis.
- If neurosyphilis is suspected, you will be referred to a specialist.

**How is syphilis treated?**
- Syphilis is treated and cured with antibiotics.

**How does someone get tested?**
- A blood test is used to test for syphilis.
- Syphilis can also be detected in the fluid from a syphilis lesion or sore.
- Staging of syphilis is based on your symptoms, physical assessment, testing history, and test results.
### What is HPV?
Human papillomavirus (HPV) is an extremely common virus with over 100 strains or types. HPV is the most common sexually transmitted and blood borne infection (STBBI) in Canada. Up to 75 per cent of people will come in contact with this virus during their life. Many people are able to clear the infection within two years.

### What are genital warts?
Genital warts are lesions that are caused by HPV.

### How is it transmitted?
HPV is transmitted by skin-to-skin contact, often through sexual contact.

### What are the symptoms?
There are usually no symptoms and people do not know they have HPV. If symptoms develop, it may take two to three months, or even years, for them to appear. HPV can cause warts in the genital area. They can look like common skin warts, and usually appear as soft or hard skin bumps. The warts often have a cauliflower-like appearance and may range in colour from pink, flesh-colour, white, brown or grey. They can be raised or flat, single or multiple.

### How do I get tested?
There is currently no routine diagnostic test for HPV in Canada. A health care practitioner can examine skin for genital warts.

### How is it treated?
Treatments are available to remove warts and may reduce the risk of transmission to sexual partners. Several treatments may be required before all the warts are gone. Treatments used may vary depending on the number and location of the warts.
### How is it prevented?
Condoms can help prevent the spread of HPV, but they do not provide full protection. An HPV vaccine is also available to protect against the most common strains of HPV.

**Possible complications:** Some types of HPV can cause cancer of the cervix, as well as other rare cancers of the penis, vulva, anus or throat.

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| **Herpes**  
Viral  
- Caused by the herpes simplex virus (HSV)  
- May cause blisters or sores on the mouth or genitals  
- Transmitted by skin-to-skin contact, usually during sexual contact  
- There is no cure and often people will have recurring outbreaks. |
| **What is genital herpes?**  
- Genital herpes is caused by the herpes simplex virus (HSV).  
- There are two main types of Herpes Simplex Viruses, HSV 1 and HSV 2. Either type may cause blisters or sores on the mouth or genitals.  
- There is no cure for genital herpes and often people will have recurring outbreaks.  
- During these outbreaks the infected person will have sores and symptoms for a while, then the virus will go into a dormant stage and the person will have no symptoms again until the next outbreak.  
- It is still possible to transmit the virus during the dormant stages when a person has no symptoms. |
| **How is it transmitted?**  
- Genital herpes is spread through skin-to-skin contact, usually during oral, vaginal or anal sex.  
- Even people who don’t have any visible sores or blisters may still unknowingly pass the virus to their sexual partner(s). |
| **What are the symptoms?**  
- If symptoms of a primary outbreak occur, they will usually develop between six and 21 days after skin-to-skin contact with an infected partner. |
Many people do not notice a primary outbreak, making it unclear as to when they were infected.

**Primary outbreak symptoms**
- Small blisters in the vagina or on the vulva or cervix; on or around the penis or testicles; on or around the anus; or on the thighs or buttocks
- Pain during urination
- Fever and aches in the joints and muscles
- General feeling of ill health

**Recurrent outbreaks**
- The number of outbreaks and the amount of time between outbreaks varies from person to person. Some people may have them frequently and others may have them only rarely. Usually occurs in same area as the primary outbreak. Itching or tingling at site of infection may occur. Less severe and shorter in duration.

**How do I get tested?**
- A swab of a sore or blister may be taken.
- In certain circumstances, and when available, a blood test may be done to test for genital herpes.

**How is it treated?**
- There is no cure for herpes, but effective treatments for outbreaks do exist. To be effective these treatments must be started immediately after symptoms appear.

**Emotional effects of genital herpes:** For many people, a herpes diagnosis can cause a strong emotional response. People may feel anger, embarrassment, worry or guilt. Often, people will feel depression, fear, rejection or isolation. These are very common reactions and will not last forever. It is important to talk about these feelings with someone you trust.
trust, such as a health professional, a supportive person in your life or your partner. Many other people have felt the same way. Are there complications? Rarely, people with genital herpes may spread the virus to other parts of their own body with their hands. Transmission to the eye can be very serious. It is important to wash and dry hands thoroughly after touching sores or blisters in order to prevent spreading the infection. If you become pregnant, it is important that you tell your health care provider if you or your partner have genital herpes.

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### What is HIV?

HIV is an infection that can weaken a person’s immune system and their ability to fight infections. Over time, this can lead to people becoming sick or seriously ill. Symptoms of HIV can include sore muscles, feeling tired, night sweats, sore throat, fever, weight loss, swollen lymph nodes, but generally, people have no symptoms at all. When HIV is in the body for a long time without any treatment, it can lead to the most serious stage called Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). During this stage, the immune system is so weak that rare infections and cancers may develop.

### How is it transmitted?

HIV is found in blood, semen (including pre-ejaculate), vaginal fluids, rectal fluids, and breast milk of people living with HIV.

- Having anal or vaginal sex without a condom.
- Sharing needles/syringes used to inject drugs (including steroids).

### Other ways to pass HIV between people include:

- Having oral sex without a condom or dental dam
- Sharing sex toys
- Sharing drug equipment, like cookers, filters, pipes, etc.
- Sharing needles, ink or jewellery for tattoos, body piercings or body modifications
Sharing acupuncture needles
Pregnancy, childbirth or breast/chestfeeding

**HIV in not passed through:**
Shaking hands
Hugs or kisses
Coughs or sneezes
Utensils
Toilet seats or water fountains
Insects or animals

**Testing:**
The only way to be tested for HIV is through a blood test done 6-12 weeks after having sex or sharing drug equipment.

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**Reportable STBBI**

**Reminder for students:** There are other infections that are not considered an STBBI. If something does not feel, look, and smell right talk to your health care provider as you know what is normal and abnormal for your own body and be sure to advocate for yourself.

**Important:** STBBI can lead to long term complications if left untreated. This applies to both viral and bacterial infections.

The following infections are reportable STBBI. These STBBI, when diagnosed, require health providers to report these results to the local public health officials.

- Chlamydia
- Gonorrhea
- Syphilis
- Hepatitis B & C
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
Testing should be considered:
- Prior to being sexually active with a new partner
- During regular check up appointments
- When experiencing symptoms such as pain during sex, sores, bleeding after sex, abnormal discharge, or mid-cycle bleeding

Remember: Partners may not always disclose STBBIs or know that they have one. Testing and communication are important for protection.

Testing:
- Types of testing; blood test, urine sample, swab of the cervix, vagina, throat or rectum
  - No age requirement
  - Tip: A student can take a picture of their health card to keep in their phone in case they forget their card or do not keep it with them.
  - Completely confidential

Where to get tested:
- Primary care provider
- Walk-in clinics
- University or College Health Services
- Ottawa Public Health Sexual Health Clinic

For information on protection against STBBIs, refer to the OPH module titled: “Preventing Pregnancy and STBBIs”.

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**Resources & services**

- Where do you find credible information on sexual health?
  - The Link
  - Ottawa Public Health
  - Community health clinic
  - Primary health care provider
  - and other health care professionals
  - Walk-in clinic
  - Sexual Health Clinic: 613-234-4641
  - Sexual Health Infoline Ontario: 1-800-668-2437

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**Questions?**

OPH wants you to protect yourself if you are sexually active.
Need more information?
Scan the QR code
Free condoms available!
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**References**

- The Link Ottawa
- Ottawa Public Health
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada
- Planned Parenthood
- Alberta Health Services
- UCSF Health
- Niagara Region: www.niagararegion.ca