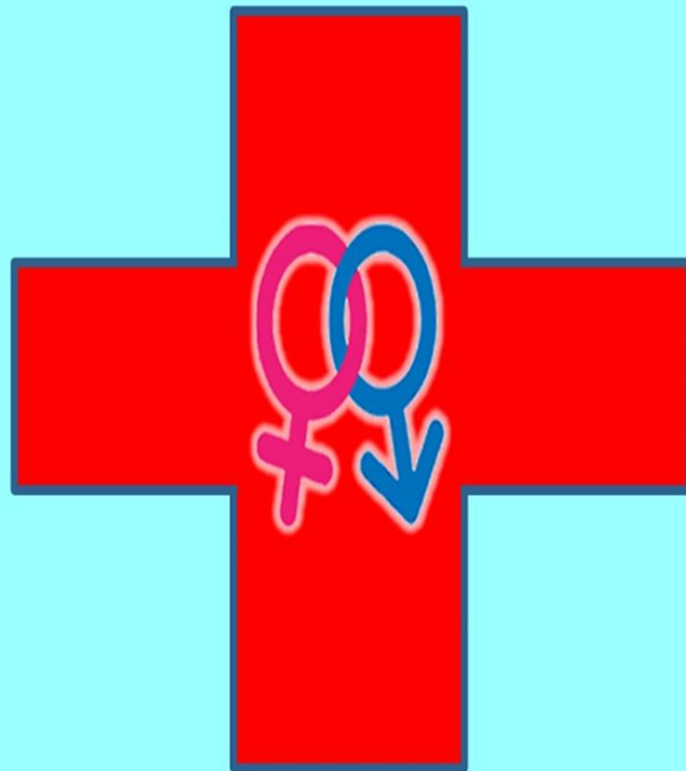


**SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH  
MADE SIMPLE**



**Educational Resource for Young Adolescents**

**Jacqueline Nkrumah**

**Sexual and Reproductive Health Made Simple. Educational  
Resource for Young Adolescents**

Jacqueline Nkrumah

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## **Preface**

The upsurge in teenage pregnancy and recurrent pregnancy is a serious public health concern in Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa. Teenage pregnancy contributes to poor adolescent health outcomes, population growth, a vicious cycle of poverty in families and communities, and other social problems. Although Ghana has made an effort to intervene in adolescent health in various areas, Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) education continues to suffer from stigma, acceptance, and physical and language access to educational and learning materials. While evidence shows the value of comprehensive SRH literacy to reduced adolescent pregnancy and recurrent pregnancies, SRH education and educational materials written in formats that support reading and understanding in low-literate people are difficult to reach, particularly at the local level. Further, young adolescents in rural and peri-urban areas have limited access to internet connectivity and facilities, making it impossible to get safe and structured SRH information. Moreover, young adolescents will need instructional support to be able to use internet-based information.

This resource was developed to improve physical and language access to comprehensive SRH information and education among young adolescents. The resource was developed for the author's Ph.D. project work. The purpose was to understand how access to readable and comprehensible SRH resources can improve SRH literacy in young adolescents. The author gleaned SRH materials from varied sources and used participatory action research to develop the resource based on the SRH literacy needs and preferences of young adolescents in the Effutu Municipality, Central Region, Ghana. Some technical words are retained in the text to make it contextually meaningful. Yet, the readability indices of the text show it will be readable and understandable to average pupils in grades three to six.

The resource is in two formats, The simplified text-only format and the simplified text enhanced with pictures. The effectiveness of the resource in improving literacy was assessed through an experimental study. The results suggested that if young adolescents partially learn the resource, the simplified text-only resource will improve their SRH literacy by 12.287 units over six weeks. The picture-enhanced resource will improve adolescents' SRH literacy by 10.261 units in the same period.

## **Acknowledgement**

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# **FORMAT ONE**

## **The Simplified Text-only Format**

### **Purpose and Objectives of the Resource**

This resource aims to present teens' SRH information in an easy-to-read format for low-literate young teens to better their SRH literacy. Teenagers need the correct information offered in easy-to-read, clear writing. Such material would help them make the right choices regarding their reproductive and sexual lives.

It is hoped that the young adolescent will be able to:

1. read and understand the SRH topics in this material
2. better their SRH knowledge
3. make informed choices to better their SRH lives

## **Introduction**

Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) refers to a person's ability to feel well in their body and mind while also being able to relate well with others in all matters linked to the reproductive organs. It also means that adults/grownups can have pleasant and safe sex. They can have children and choose if they want to have them, when to have them, and how many children they would like.

But young teens are not mature enough to have sex. They are not grown enough to make babies. Also, young teens cannot choose between safe and unsafe sex. So, they can fall ill or die if they choose to have sex and bear children. They will be unable to reach the state where they can feel well in the body and mind. In this case, early sex and childbirth will lead to poor SRH in young teens.

This resource introduces young adolescents to six fundamental lessons in SRH. The first lesson introduces readers to adolescence, or the early teenage (10–14) years, and the physiological and emotional changes that take place in the body. Because of the enormous bodily changes and strong sexual desires during the early teenage years, the resource addresses the matter of sexual desires and how to deal with them. Lesson three explains to the young adolescent how to keep friendship and etiquette to observe in friendship. The resource explains the concept of abstinence in detail in lesson four. Lesson five presents information on five common sexually transmitted infections (STIs), their spread, and treatment. Finally, lesson six advises the young adolescent about ways to prevent STIs and pregnancy.

## **LESSON ONE**

### **PUBERTAL CHANGES**

**Puberty** is part of **teenage years**. It is a stage where a boy/girl changes and moves from a child into an adult but has not fully matured into an adult. Girls begin to see outward changes in their bodies by the age of 8 -13 years. Boys start to see changes in their bodies by 9 – 14 years. A person in the teenage years is called a teenager, a teen, or an adolescent.

The teenage years are divided into two. They are:

1. Young teenage years. It is the period between 10 and 14 years. A person in the young teenage years is called a young teen/adolescent.
  
2. Old teenage years. It is the period between 15 and 19 years. A person in the old teenage years is called an old teen/adolescent.

#### **Where do Changes at Puberty Take Place?**

Changes at puberty take place:

- 1. In the mind**
- 2. In the physical body**
- 3. In the way you feel**

#### **Causes of Changes at Puberty?**

Changes at puberty happen because at age 8 or more, the body begins to produce body chemicals called hormones.

The hormones will make you to:

1. Have sexual feelings.
2. Want to look good.

3. Want to take risks.
4. Feel like attacking those who disagree with you.

### **Outward Changes in the Body of Boys**

Boys would mostly see the following changes:

1. Muscles in legs and arms.
2. Broad shoulders and chest.
3. Longer and bigger penis.
4. Wet dreams when sleeping.

### **Outward Changes in the Body of Girls**

Girls usually undergo the following changes:

1. Breast growth
2. Broad hips/Body shape
3. Vaginal discharge (fluid)
4. Menses/period

### **Outward Changes in both Boys and Girls**

The following changes usually take place in the bodies of boys and girls.

1. Oily skin
2. Pimples on face
3. Hair in pubic areas
4. Voice changes
5. Changes in feelings
6. Sweat and body odor.

## **The Menstrual /Menses Cycle**

Let's look at one of the main changes in a girl's life, **menses or period**. Menses is the monthly blood flow in a girl/woman's life. Girls begin to produce ova (eggs) at age eight or more. The child-bearing organ that make the eggs are two. They are called ovaries (egg-making organs). Each month, an egg grows inside one ovary and lives between 12 and 24 hours. The womb also makes a lining rich in blood to receive the egg if it meets with a sperm (locally called juice among boys). The egg then moves to the womb within two weeks to grow into a baby. If not, the egg will die, move from the ovary to the womb, and the womb will wash it away with the lining.

The womb uses blood to wash away the lining and the egg. This process is called menses/period. It usually lasts between 5 and 7 days. The washing of the egg and the lining month by month is called the menses cycle. It is counted from the first day of a girl/woman's last menses to the start of the next menses. Usually, the menses cycle is 28 days long. But the length of the menses cycle may change as a girl grows. A girl/woman's menses may occur every 21 to 35 days.

### **Why Does the Menses Cycle Change?**

Several things can change the timing of a girl/woman's menses cycle. They are:

1. Pregnancy

2. Poor eating habit. E.g., eating food poor in nutrients.
3. More exercise
4. Medications
5. Age (at age 45 or more, a woman will begin to have changes in their menses cycle and later stop menstruating).
6. Sicknesses/Illnesses

### **Ovulation /Egg-releasing Period**

Egg-releasing period (ovulation) is when the ovaries release the eggs. It usually takes place between 12 and 14 days, counting from the first day of the last menses. A boy/man's sperm can live in the ovaries for 3 to 5 days. Because sperm can stay longer in the ovaries before it dies, a girl/woman should not have unsafe sex four days before and up to the day of ovulation. If not, the sperm may meet with the egg for the girl/woman to get pregnant. Having sex on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the last menses to the start of the next menses would not lead to pregnancy. The period between the 16<sup>th</sup> day of a girl's menses and the first seven days of the next menses is called the 'safe period'.

#### **How can I Calculate the Ovulation Period?**

Ovulation can be defined using a calendar or a chart. First, you must note down the first day of your menses. The date will help you to do the counting. As such, day one is the first day of your menses. Let's look at an example using Ama's menses cycle.

## February 2022

| Mon.      | Tue.              | Wed.      | Thur.      | Fri.       | Sat.      | Sun.      |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
|           | 1 day 1 of menses | 2         | 3          | 4          | 5         | 6         |
| 7         | 8 caution         | 9 caution | 10 caution | 11 caution | 12 No sex | 13 No Sex |
| 14 No Sex | 15 No Sex         | 16        | 17         | 18         | 19        | 20        |
| 21        | 22                | 23        | 24         | 25         | 26        | 27        |
| 28        |                   |           |            |            |           |           |

From the above calendar, Ama has a 28-day cycle. she had her last menses on February 1, 2022. Her menses began on February 1 and ended on February 7, 2022. So, February 1 is day one of Ama's menses cycle. Day ten of her cycle would be February 10, 2022. Her ovulation period will fall between 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022. The 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> February has a yellow color. It means Ama should be cautious not to have unsafe sex. 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> February has a red color, meaning an unsafe period. Ama will become pregnant if she has unsafe sex between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2022. Ama's unsafe period will likely end by her cycle's 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> day. February 15 also has a yellow color. It is a day of caution for Ama. She may get pregnant should she have unsafe sex on this day.

**How would a girl/woman know she is Ovulating?**

1. A few days after menses, a girl/woman will see slippery/slimy clear fluid from the cervix area.
2. The lower part of her stomach, close to the pubic bone, may pain her.
3. Her mood may also change.

**How do I Keep Personal Hygiene During Menses?**

To keep personal hygiene, follow the tips to below.

1. Get yourself pieces of clean cotton cloth (menses cloth) or a pack of a clean pad.
2. Change your pad or menses cloth at least three times a day. Use the toilet to change your pad if you are in school. You can change in your room when in the house.
3. Put used menses cloth into a polybag, tie it, and keep it in your bag when in school.
4. Rap sanitary pad in its rapper and put it into the toilet bin.
5. Wash your hands with soap and clean running water after changing.
6. Wash menses cloth and underwear with hot water and dry them in the sun.
7. Iron menses cloth, fold and keep it clean and dry for use in your next menses.



8. Bath at least two times a day to keep fresh, mostly during menses.

### **DON'TS**

1. Do not throw used sanitary pads/menses cloths in the WC, toilet pit, and toilet floor.
2. Do not throw used sanitary pad/menses cloth on a rubbish pile or in the bush.

## **LESSON TWO**

### **SEXUAL ACTIVITIES**

The term **Sex** may mean different things. In one setting, sex may tell gender. That is male and female, or a boy and girl. Sex may also refer to sexual intercourse (a sex act). In this lesson, sex stands for a sex act.

A sex act (known as ‘sleeping with someone in the local language) is an act of **Lovemaking** between male and female adults or man and wife. It is also an act of childbearing. Boys and girls of your age do not understand much about Love. So, if you go into a personal friendship to have sex, it is only for **Lust** and not **Love**.

#### **Types and Forms of Sexual Activities**

Sexual activities can be grouped into two. They are:

1. Outercourse
2. The sex act

#### **What is Outercourse?**

Outercourse includes acts such as:

1. Cuddling
2. Kissing
3. Rubbing against each other with cloths on.
4. Masturbating each other or fingering.

The acts named above usually happen between male and female adults or man and wife.

## **What is a Sex Act?**

A sex act involves pushing the male's penis into the vagina of a female. Also, a sex act may take different forms. They are:

1. **Vaginal sex/intercourse** (sex through the vagina) It involves pushing the penis or anything that looks like the penis into the female's vagina.
2. **Anal sex/intercourse** (sex through the anus). It also involves pushing the penis or anything that looks like the penis into the anus of another person.
3. **Oral Sex** (sex through the mouth). It happens when a female puts a male's penis into her mouth or when a male licks any part of the female sex organ.

All the sex acts named above are not safe. They increase the spread of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and unwanted pregnancies.

## **Risks in Sexual Activities**

Risks in sexual activities can be grouped into three. They are:

1. No-Risk activities
2. Low-Risk activities
3. High-Risk activities

Let's look at them in order.

### **1. No-risk Sexual Activities**

No-risk activities are:

- A. Hugging
- B. Holding of hands

For example, Araba and Kofi are friends who learn and play together without engaging in sexual activities. Araba and Kofi can hold hands and hug each other without falling into sexual health risks.

## **2. Low-risk Sexual Activities**

Low-risk sexual activities include:

- A.** Kissing
- B.** Massaging each other with cloths on.
- C.** Massaging each other.

These kinds of sexual activities are a bit risky. They can lead to a sex act and the spread of STIs.

## **3. High-risk Sexual Activities**

High-risk sexual activities are the main cause of STIs and teen pregnancy. They include:

- A.** Having sex without a condom.
- B.** Having sex with more than one boy or girl.
- C.** Having sex for money.
- D.** Having sex through the anus.
- E.** Having sex with someone who uses hard drugs.

### **Same-Sex Sexual Practices**

Another sexual activity you must **beware** of as young teens is same-sex sexual practices. This sexual practice refers to all the sexual activities talked about earlier **in this Lesson**, except that it happens between people of the same sex.

## RAPE AND DEFILEMENT

Rape is forced and unwanted sex. Forced and unwanted sex may include:

1. **Defilement/sexual abuse.** Abuse happens when a male/female forces someone below age 16 into having sex. Sexual abuse also happens when a person engages in sexual relationship with someone below 16 years.
2. **Rape.** Rape happens when a male/female forces someone age 16 or more into having sex.  
Rape and sexual abuse are wrongdoings. The laws of Ghana do not accept them. A person who rapes another is called a rapist.

**What Should I  
do to Avoid  
Rape?**

**Avoid the following:**

1. **Do not** be alone with the opposite sex.
2. **Avoid** petting the opposite sex.
3. **Report** anyone touching your private part to your parents/guardian. Your private parts include those body parts listed on page 13.

**What is the  
Right Thing  
to do if I am  
Raped?**

1. **Protect yourself** by telling your parents/guardian without wasting time.
2. **Do not** pay attention to the threats of the rapist.
3. Let your parents/guardian report the matter to the police and send you to the hospital.

## LESSON THREE FRIENDSHIP

Young boys and girls make a lot of friends. You can make friends with schoolmates, those in your house, and your community. Let's look at how you may keep such friendships.

### **Do's and Don'ts**

Keeping rules in your friendship would help you keep **good morals** and avoid sexual feelings that may lead to **early sexual activities**.

### **DO**

Friends should help each other and make each other feel good about themselves. You can do the following for your friends:

1. Help your friends when they are going through bad times.
2. If a friend needs someone to talk to, listen to them.
3. Include your friends in the good things you do.
4. Always stand by your friends.
5. Respect and accept your friends for who they are.
6. Avoid people who will put you in danger or make you feel unsafe.
7. Avoid people who will put you down or make you feel worthless.

## **Don'ts**

1. Don't hide to leave the house to meet a friend. **Tell** your parents/guardian wherever you are going.
2. **Do** not be alone with a male/female friend.
3. **Do** not touch the private parts of your male/female friend when playing together. Report those who do that to your parents/guardian.

**Which Parts of  
the Body are  
Private?**

The private parts of a boy/girl are:

1. The breast
2. Lips
3. Thigh
4. Buttocks
5. Vagina
6. Penis

## **LESSON FOUR ABSTINENCE**

Abstinence (saying no to sexual activities) is the simplest way to prevent pregnancy and some STIs. If a boy and a girl do not have sex, pregnancy cannot occur. Saying no to sex means avoiding all the sexual activities we have learned. For example, Abena and Kwame want to use their time to learn and pass all their exams. So, they have decided not to have sex until they have finished university or learned a trade. Their decision means doing away with all the sexual activities we learned in lesson two. If Abena and Kwame do not stand by their choice, they will fall into many risks. Let's look at some of the risks early sex may bring your way.

### **Early sex will get you Pregnant and Affect your Health.**

1. Girls who get pregnant at an early age can die during pregnancy or at the time of birth.
2. Others may not be able to deliver the baby on their own. Such girls will have to deliver through operation.
3. Boys/girls who have early sex may get STIs.

**You should know** that some STIs like HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C do not spread through sex alone. You can get them through some other means. See lesson 5 for more on STIs.



### **Early Pregnancy will Affect your Future.**

1. A girl who gets pregnant early may drop out of school.
2. A boy/girl may not be able to learn a trade due to early sex and pregnancy. They would become poor and would not be able to take care of themselves and the baby.
3. Children of young teens may not go to school. They may grow up to become poor.

### **Early pregnancy Brings Shame to Families.**

1. Your peers may laugh and tease you.
2. Your parents would feel ashamed of you. Their friends would mock them. They would be called “bad parents.”
3. In many cases, boys/men who get girls pregnant leave them to suffer alone. So, girls, be wise.

### **Benefits of Saying no to Sex**

If you choose not to have sex, you would be able to:

1. Follow your faith.
2. Fully finish school on time.
3. Learn a trade.
4. Follow the good guidance of your parents.
5. Wait to find the right guy/girl.
6. Be with a guy/girl without the troubles of early sex.

**Tips to  
Overcome  
your Sexual  
Feelings.**

**Follow the Tips below:**

- 1. Think** about what can happen to you if you follow your sexual feelings.
- 2.** Avoid watching porn pictures and videos (locally called porno). Not all porn videos and pictures are real.
- 3.** Be careful with the use of social media.
- 4.** Pray always if you believe in prayer.
- 5.** Choose your friends wisely.

**You should** also **direct** your sexual feelings to do something gainful, such as:

1. Playing musical instruments
2. Learning a trade
3. Playing football, etc.

## **Support to Overcome Sexual Desires**

It is natural for a young boy/girl to have sexual feelings. You will feel this way because at puberty your body starts to make hormones that makes you feel for sex. If you have trouble overcoming your desire, you may ask the following **people for advice**.

1. A Family Planning Nurse
2. The Girl Child Educator
3. The School Counselors

If you want to know more about puberty, how to say no to sex, and STIs, check out the following sources for more help.

1. The internet
2. Books.
3. Magazines

You can also check social media handles for some advice. The social media handle may include:

1. Facebook
2. YouTube

You can also get guidance from the websites of **Groups** that give advice and guidance to teens, such as:

1. Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG)
2. KidsHealth
3. Young Men's Health
4. SafeTeens
5. Other helpful websites

**How do I Tell  
the Website I  
have Visited  
has Safe  
Advice and  
Guidance?**

There are two basic checks you can make about safe websites. They are:

1. The URL addresses
2. The padlock signs

All websites have URL addresses that begin with 'http.' safe websites that give safe advice have URL addresses in this form

- 'https' or a padlock sign followed by 'https'. See the example below:

<https://www.thesaurus.com>

## Common STIs

- Chlamydia  
(Chlam)
- Syphilis
- Gonorrhoea (Gono)
- Yeast infection  
(Whites)
- Trichomoniasis  
(Trich)
- HIV/AIDS

## LESSON FIVE SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIs)

### What is STI?

STIs means Sexually Transmitted Infections. STIs are sicknesses/illnesses that usually spread through unsafe sexual acts. We shall look at a few of them.

### Syphilis

An STI germ causes syphilis. You can get syphilis by having oral, anal, and vaginal sex without a condom. Usually, syphilis spreads through contact with a syphilis sore. It is hard for someone to see the sore. So those who have syphilis may not know they have it until they test for it.

You can also get syphilis in the following ways:

1. Sharing injection needles.
2. A girl/woman living with syphilis can pass it on to her baby at birth and during pregnancy.

### **How do I Know I have Syphilis?**

Not all people will show symptoms (signs) of syphilis. Yet, others may show the signs below:

1. Girls/women may have sores around and inside the vagina.
2. Boys/men may have sores on their penis.

Also, these signs may show some weeks later.

- A. Feeling of illness
- B. Fever
- C. Headache
- D. Rashes on palms, hands, and feet
- E. Weight loss

### **When and how can I Test for Syphilis?**

If you have the habit of engaging in sex acts with boys/men or girls/women with many girlfriends/boyfriends, you need to test often to know whether you have syphilis. Check at least every two months.

### **How is Syphilis Treated?**

If you feel/see the signs of Syphilis, do the following:

1. Tell your parents/guardian about the signs you have.
2. Let your parents/guardian take you to the hospital for treatment.

## **Gonorrhoea (Gono)**

Gonorrhoea (locally called gono) is an infection (illness) caused by an STI germ. You can get gonorrhoea by having sex with someone who has it without a condom. You can also get it if you have anal sex with someone who has gonorrhoea. The gonorrhoea germ can live only in wet places in the body. The wet areas may include the eye, the throat, and the vagina. If any of the wet places in your body come into contact with other body parts carrying the gonorrhoea germ, you can get the illness. A pregnant girl/woman living with gonorrhoea can pass it on to her baby at birth and during pregnancy. The danger is that you can easily get the illness.

### **How do I Know I have Gonorrhoea?**

The following signs will show in your body within 14 days of having gonorrhoea:

- 1.** Sore throat (gonorrhoea in the throat).
- 2.** Pain, anal discharge, and bleeding (gonorrhoea in the anus).
- 3.** Redness, itching, or discharge of the eyes (gonorrhoea in the eye).
- 4.** Girls will feel pain in the lower part of their stomach. They will have vaginal discharge, and boys will also see yellowish-green discharge from their penis.
- 5.** Girls will have a burning feeling when urinating and pains during sex.
- 6.** Boys will have burning feelings when urinating and pain and swelling in one of their testicles.

There is a treatment for gonorrhoea. So, when you see signs of the illness, follow the tips for treating syphilis.

## Vaginal Yeast Infection

Vaginal yeast (also known as White) is an illness caused by the germ called **Candida**. Vaginal yeast is not part of the list of STIs. The germ already lives in the vagina of females. But when it grows more than is needed, it becomes illness to the vagina. Vaginal yeast also infects many girls during their first sexual act. Boys/men can also be carriers of the candida germ. Girls can also get the yeast germ by using panties and WCs/toilets stained by the candida germ. The candida germ can live in the throat if a person engages in oral sex with another who has the illness.

### How do I know I have Vaginal Yeast Illness?

The following signs will show:

1. Girls will itch in the vagina and the vulva. They would have burning feelings in the vagina each time they urinate. The vagina will become reddish. Rashes may also grow on the tip of the vagina.
2. Girls will see odorless and cheese-like fluids coming out of the vagina.
3. More fluids may also come out of the vagina.

### How do I Treat the Vaginal Yeast Illness?

1. Tell your parents/guardian about it.  
They can buy you medicine from the pharmacy or take you to see a doctor.
2. If you have signs of vaginal yeast after using medicines from the pharmacy, you will have to see a doctor.



## Chlamydia Infection

Chlamydia (chlam, as you may want to call it) is an illness caused by an STI germ. You can get the germ by having vaginal sex without a condom. You can also get chlamydia when you have sex through the anus of someone with the illness. You can have chlamydia germ in your throat if you have oral sex with someone with the illness. The sad thing is that you do not feel or see any sign when you get chlamydia.

### How do I Know I have Chlamydia?

Very few people show signs when they have chlamydia. The signs of the illness will show three weeks after getting the germ.

1. Girls will discharge water-like fluid, which smells bad from the vagina.
2. Boys will see milky fluid coming from the penis. They will feel pains in their testis.
3. Both boys and girls will have burning feelings when urinating.

### How is Chlamydia Treated?

1. You will only know you have the illness when you **test** for it.
2. To test for it, you must **tell your parents/caregivers** to take you to see a doctor.

It would help if you **told the doctor** clearly about the signs to give you the proper test and treatment.

## **Trichomoniasis**

Trichomoniasis (Tricho, as you may want to call it.) is an illness caused by the STI germ called **Trichomonas**. It infects the urine tube (urethra) and the penis. Trichomoniasis also infects the vagina and the vulva but not the other parts of the body. People who have the illness may not show or feel any signs. But the following signs may show in others:

1. Girls who have trichomoniasis will see yellow or green color fluid in their vagina. The fluid usually smells bad.
2. Both boys and girls may feel pains when urinating
3. Girls may bleed after having sex.
4. Boys may also itch and have penis discharge. They may have pains after having sex.

### **How Does Trichomoniasis Spread?**

1. You can easily get trichomoniasis if you have the habit of having sex with more than one boy/man or one girl/woman.
2. Also, you can get trichomoniasis by having sex with someone who has the illness without a condom.

### **How is this illness treated?**

There is a treatment for this illness. When you have signs of the illness, follow the tips provided for treating syphilis.

## **HIV/AIDS**

HIV is caused by a germ called Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). This virus attacks the body's defense against illness. If you do not treat HIV, it will worsen and turn into acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). HIV has no treatment. Once a person gets HIV, it will remain with them for life. The good news is that those with HIV can live with it for a long time. You can take medicines to stop the HIV germ from harming you. The medication can make an HIV person live a healthy life and reduce the spread of HIV.

### **How does HIV Spread?**

1. HIV spreads through blood, semen, and sperm cells (Juice), vagina fluid, and breast milk.
2. You can have HIV when you have vaginal sex or anal sex with an HIV person without a condom.
3. You can have HIV when you share needles, syringes, or toothbrushes with others who have HIV.
4. Women/girls can pass it on to their babies during pregnancy and childbirth.

**How do I  
know I  
have  
HIV?**

The following signs will show in people who have HIV.

1. Fever
2. Sore throat
3. Night sweat
4. Tiredness

5. Headache
6. Diarrhea
7. Mouth sores.

### **How to Live with HIV?**

Some people may feel the signs of HIV 2-4 weeks after getting the HIV germ. Others will show signs months after having the germ. The signs of HIV may last for a few days or many days. When you feel or see the signs, it does not mean you have HIV. You can know you have HIV by testing for HIV.

You can live with HIV by getting HIV medicines from the hospital. You can also take preventive medicine just after you have contacted the blood of an HIV person through rape, needle prick, etc.

You can stop the spread of HIV.

1. Tell your parents/caregivers and boyfriend/girlfriend you have HIV.
2. Pregnant women who have HIV **must** seek care from the hospital. Seeking care during pregnancy will prevent your baby from getting HIV.

## LESSON SIX

### WAYS TO AVOID STIs AND PREGNANCY

Some young people may not be able to check their sexual feelings. If after seeking advice and guidance, you cannot control your sexual desires. You can practice safe sex. It means the use of condoms and other methods of preventing pregnancy. Let's consider condoms.

### CONDOM

A condom is a soft rubber-like material. It is worn on the penis or inserted in the vagina before sex. A condom helps prevent STIs and pregnancy. Yet, you should know that condoms are not always reliable. It can tear during sex if it is expired. **There are male and female** condoms. You can get a condom from any drug store or a family planning center.

#### How to keep and Use a Condom?

To keep and use a condom safely, follow the tips below.

1. Do not keep a condom in your pocket or purse. The condom can get warm and tear.
2. Do not use oils and creams to oil the vagina. Instead, use vagina gel to avoid dryness of the vagina.

You can follow the steps below to wear a condom.

1. Always use latex condoms.
2. Read the pack of a condom anytime you buy it.
3. Check for expiry date.
4. Check to make sure there is no tear on the condom.
5. Females should hold the outside of a female condom at closed end. Press sides of inner ring together with fingers and insert into vagina.

6. The longest finger should then be used to push the ring as far into the vagina.
7. Some of the condom will hang and be show outside of the vagina. Make sure that the penis is inside the condom and not between the condom and the vaginal wall.
8. Males should place a male condom over the tip of the penis. Grip the end of the condom and move it down over the length of the erect penis.
9. Slide the male condom off the penis, keeping the semen inside. Since condoms can clog the toilet if they are flushed, tie it off or put in a plastic bag and throw it into a bin.
10. Do not keep a used condom for reuse. Instead, put on a new condom for the next round of sex.

### **Other Ways to Prevent Pregnancy**

You can get the items from the family planning or family health units in hospitals, health centers, clinics, and adolescent corners. You can also get it from workplaces like PPAG and Marie Stopes clinics in Ghana. There are long-term and short-term ways to avoid pregnancy. Let's look at them.

### **Long-Term Ways to Avoid Pregnancy**

Among girls/women, there are ways to avoid pregnancy over a very long period. They include:

1. Implant
2. Intrauterine Devices (IUDs)

## **Implant**

The implant is a plastic rod that looks like a matchstick. The implant is inserted under the skin of the upper arm. Once inserted, it can remain in the upper arm for between 3 and 5 years. The implant does not prevent STIs.

## **IUDs**

IUDs are womb devices. They are placed in a girl/woman's womb to stop her from getting pregnant. There are hormonal and copper IUDs. When placed in the womb, it can remain there for 5 to 10 years. It can be removed anytime the girl/woman wants to get pregnant.

## **Short-term Ways to Avoid Pregnancy**

The short-term ways are oral medicines and injections used in a short time to avoid pregnancy. They include:

- 1.** The Injection – you can take the injection every three months.
- 2.** The Emergency Pills– you can take this pill within three days or 72 hours after having sex. Do not use this pill every time you have sex. You can use it only when sex happens by accident.
- 3.** The Regular Daily Pill. There are many kinds of daily pills. To make it work; you have to take one pill daily. It is used in the following ways based on the type:
  1. Once every day for 21days.
  2. Once every day for 28 days.
  3. Once every day for 90 days.

## **Withdrawal Method**

Withdrawal is one of the ways to avoid pregnancy. The penis is removed from the vagina and away from the female sex organ before the semen and sperm is released. If some semen drops on the vulva and has sperms, it can enter the vagina for the girl/woman to get pregnant. The withdrawal method does not always prevent pregnancy because it is hard to pull out the penis before the semen comes out. In many cases, some small amount of sperm will get into the vagina when the penis is pulled out, which may bring about pregnancy. You should know that this method does not prevent STIs.



## **FORMAT TWO**

### **Picture-enhanced Resource**

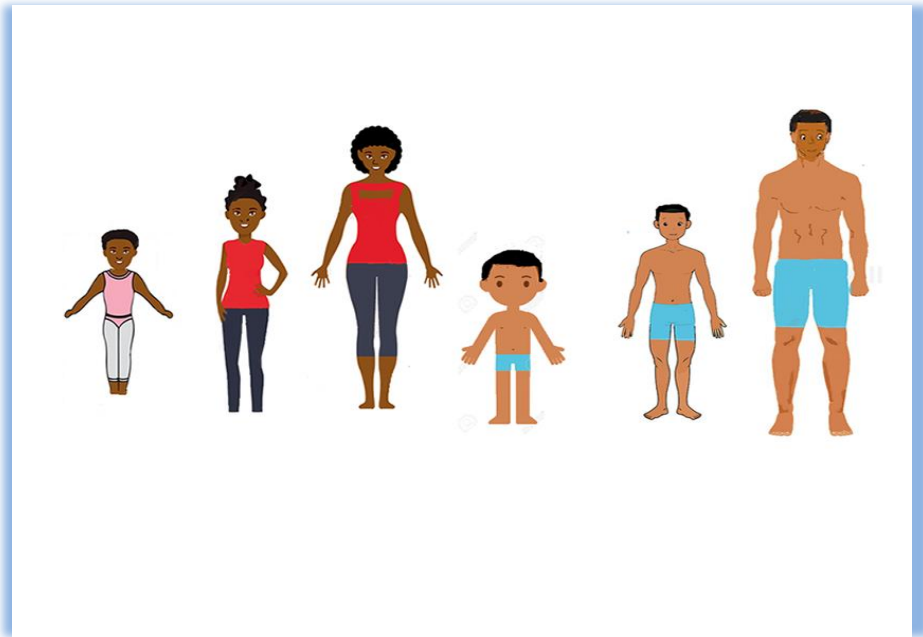
#### **Purpose and Objectives of the Resource**

This format of the resource aims to present teens' SRH information in an easy-to-read text enhanced with pictures for low-literate young teens to better their SRH literacy. The resource provides teenagers with safe SRH information in easy-to-read, clear writing. The resource would help them make the right choices regarding their reproductive and sexual lives.

It is hoped that the young adolescent will be able to:

1. read and understand the SRH topics in this material.
2. better their SRH knowledge.
3. make informed choices to better their SRH lives.

## LESSON ONE PUBERTAL CHANGES



**Puberty** is part of the **teenage years**. It is a stage where a boy/girl changes and moves from a child into a young adult but has not fully matured. Girls begin to see outward changes in their bodies by the age of 8 -13 years. Boys start to see changes in their bodies by 9 – 14 years. A person in the teenage years is called a teenager, a teen, or an adolescent.

The teenage years are divided into two. They are:

3. Young teenage years. It is the period between 10 and 14 years. A person in the young teenage years is called a young teen.
4. Old teenage years. It is the period between 15 and 19 years. A person in the old teenage years is called an old teen.

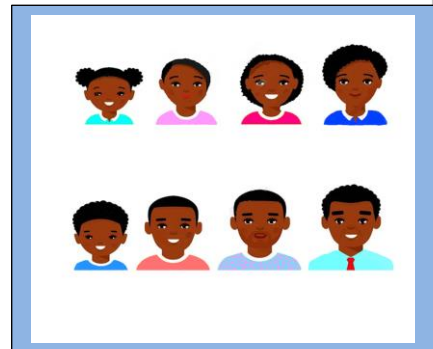
## Where do Changes at Puberty Take Place?

Changes at puberty take place:

1. In the mind.



2. In the physical body.



3. In the way you feel.

## Causes of Changes at Puberty?

Changes at puberty happen because at age 8 or more, the body begins to produce body chemicals called hormones.

The hormones will make you to:

1. Have sexual feelings.
2. Want to look good.

3. Want to take risks.
4. Want to do things on your own.
4. Want not to be controlled.
5. Disrespect people who are older than you.
6. Feel like attacking those who disagree with you.

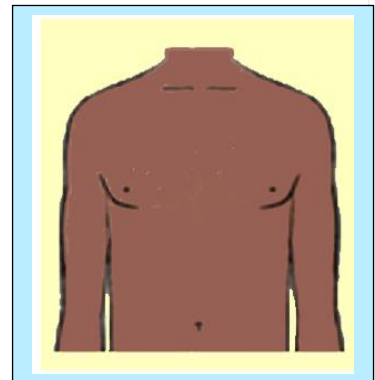
### **Changes in the body of boys**

Boys would mostly see the following changes:

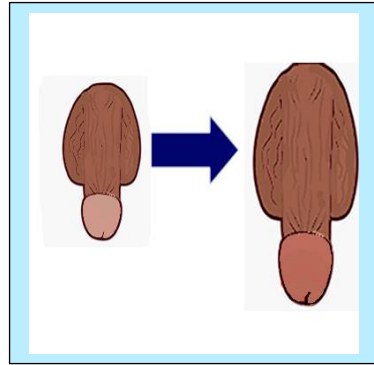
1. Muscles in legs and arms.



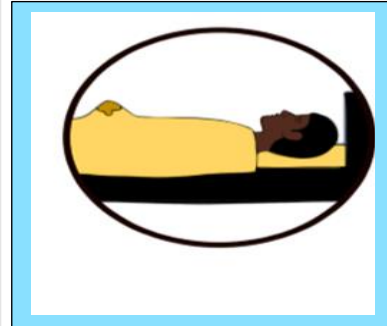
2. Broad shoulders and chest.



3. Longer and bigger penis.



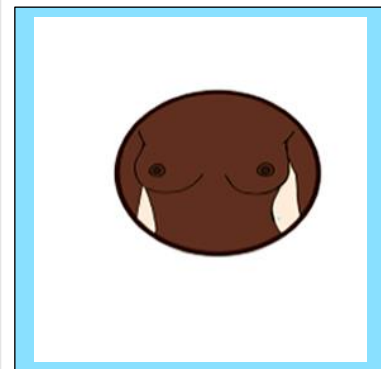
4. Wet dreams when sleeping.



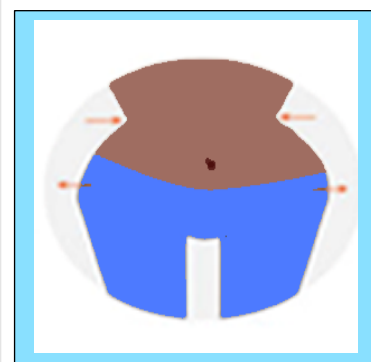
### **Changes in the body of Girls**

Girls usually undergo the following changes:

1. Breast growth



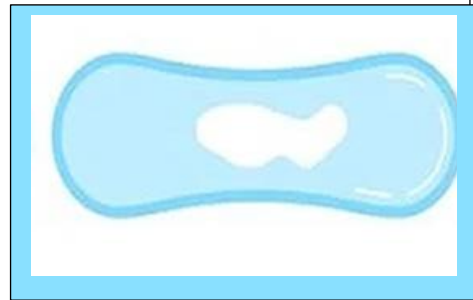
2. Broad hips/ Body shape



3. Menses/period



4. Vaginal discharge (fluid)



### **Changes in both Boys and Girls**

The following Changes usually take place in the bodies of both boys and girls.

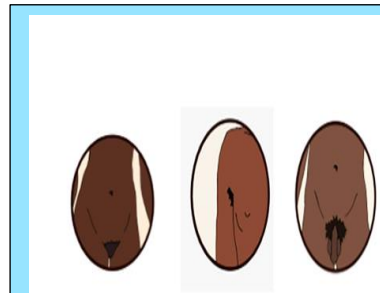
1. Oily skin



2. Pimples on face



3. Hair in pubic areas



4. Voice changes

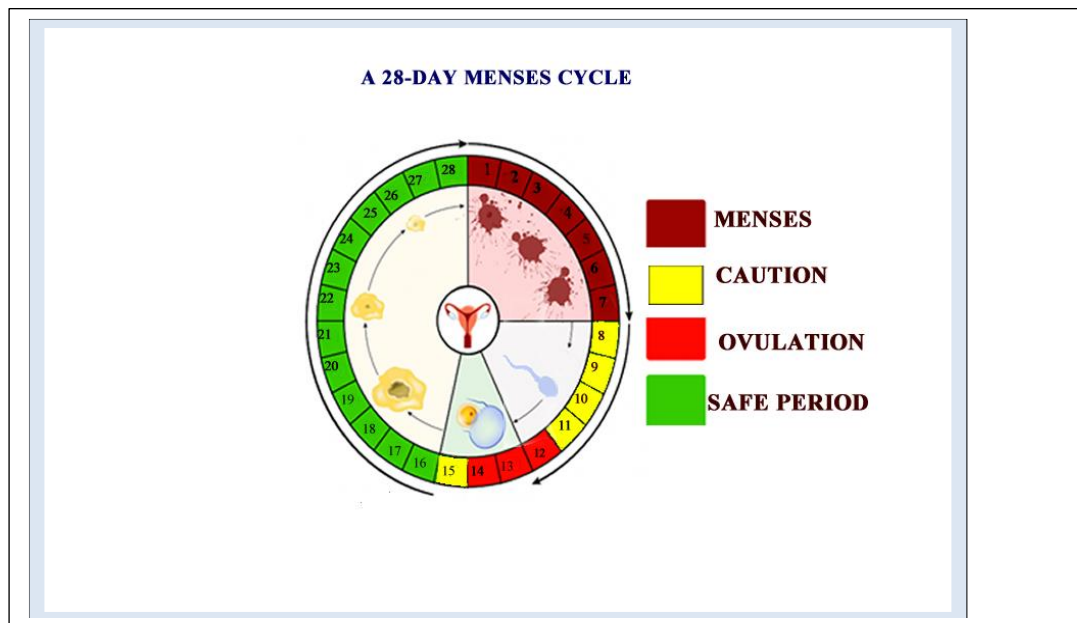


5. Sweat and body odor.



6. Changes in the way you feel.

## The Menstrual/Menses Cycle



Let's look at one of the main changes in a girl's life, **menses, or period**. Menses is the monthly blood flow in a girl/woman's life. Girls begin to produce ova (eggs) at age eight or more. The reproductive organ that makes the eggs are two. They are called ovaries (egg-making organs). Each month, an egg grows inside one ovary and lives between 12 and 24 hours. The womb also makes a lining rich in blood to receive the egg if it meets with a sperm (locally called juice among boys).

The egg then moves to the womb within two weeks to grow into a baby. If not, the egg will die, move from the ovary to the womb, and the womb will wash it away with the lining. The womb uses blood to wash away the lining and the egg. This process is called menses/period. It usually lasts between 5 and 7 days. The washing of the egg and the lining month by month is called the menses cycle.

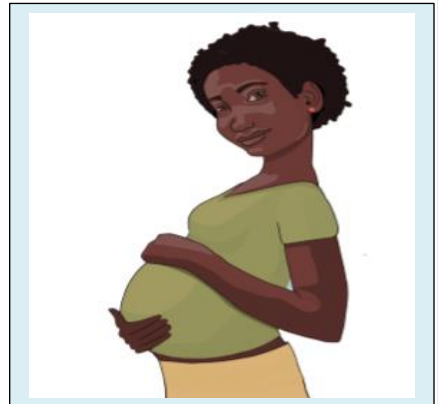


It is counted from the first day of a girl/woman's last menses to the start of the next menses. Usually, the menses cycle is 28 days long. But the length of the menses cycle may change as a girl grows. A girl/woman's menses may occur every 21 to 35 days.

### **Why Does the Menses Cycle Change?**

Several things can change the timing of a girl/woman's menses cycle. They are:

#### 1. Pregnancy



#### 2. More exercise



#### 4. Medicines

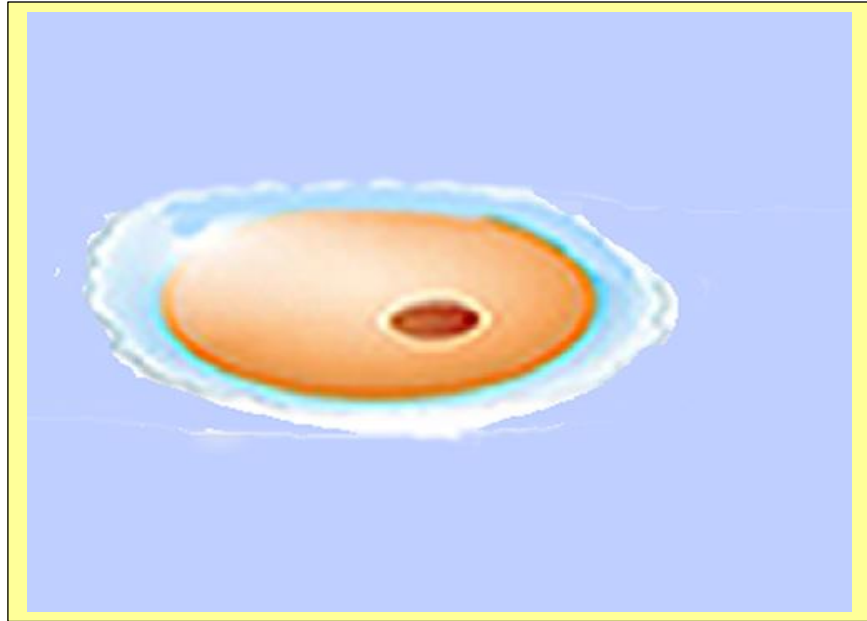


5. Age (at age 45 or more, a woman will begin to have changes in their menses cycle and later stop menstruating).



**6. Sickesses/Illnesses.** E.g., severe shortage of blood.

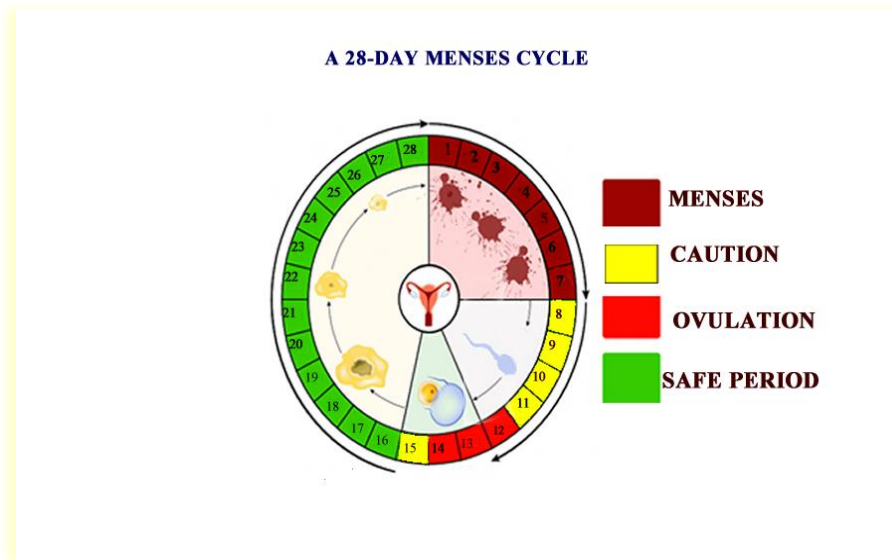
## Ovulation /Egg-releasing Period



Egg-releasing period (ovulation) is when the ovaries release the eggs. It usually takes place between 12 and 14 days, counting from the first day of the last menses. A boy/man's sperm can live in the ovaries for 3 to 5 days. Because sperm can stay longer in the ovaries before it dies, a girl/woman should not have unsafe sex four days before and up to the day of ovulation. If not, the sperm may meet with the egg for the girl/woman to get pregnant. Having sex on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the last menses to the start of the next menses would not lead to pregnancy. The period between the 16<sup>th</sup> day of a girl's menses and the first seven days of the next menses is called the 'safe period'.

## How Can I Calculate the Ovulation Period?

The ovulation period can be defined using a calendar or a chart. First, you must note down the first day of your menses. The date will help you to do the counting. Day one is the first day of your menses. Using a chart, let's look at an example of Ama's menses cycle.



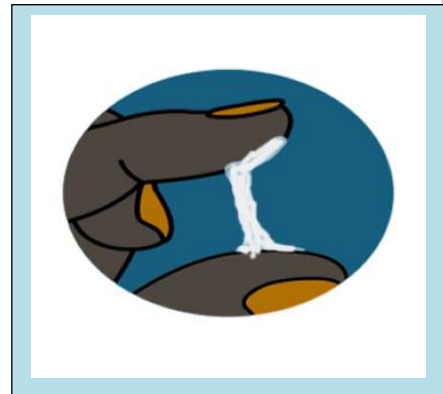
From the above chart, Ama has a 28-day cycle. she had her last menses on February 1, 2022. Her menses began on February 1 and ended on February 7, 2022. That is the portion shaded in a ruby-red color. So, February 1 is day one of Ama's menses cycle. Day ten of her cycle would be February 10, 2022. Her ovulation period will fall between 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

The 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> February has a yellow color. It means Ama should be cautious not to have unsafe sex. 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> February has a red color, meaning an unsafe period. Ama may become pregnant if she has unsafe sex between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2022.

Ama's unsafe period will likely end by her cycle's 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> day. February 15 also has a yellow color. It is a day of caution for Ama. She may get pregnant should she have unsafe sex on this day.

### How would a girl/woman know she is Ovulating?

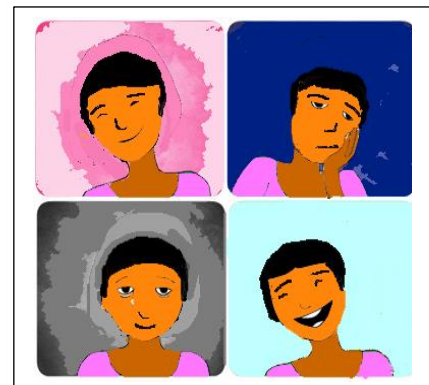
1. A few days after menses, a girl/woman will see slippery/slimy clear fluid from the cervix area.



2. The lower part of her stomach, close to the pubic bone, may pain her.



3. Her mood may also change.



## How do I Keep Personal Hygiene During Menses?

To keep personal hygiene, follow the tips below.

1. Get yourself pieces of clean cotton cloth (menses cloth) or a pack of a clean pad.
2. Change your pad or menses cloth at least three times a day. Use the toilet to change your pad if you are in school. You can change in your room when in the house.
3. Put used menses cloth into a polybag, tie it, and keep it in your bag when in school.
4. Rap sanitary pad in its rapper and put it into the toilet bin.
5. Wash your hands with soap and clean running water after changing.



6. Wash menses cloth and underwear with hot water and dry them in the sun.



7. Iron menses cloth, fold and keep it clean and dry for use in your next menses.



8. Bath at least 2x a day to keep fresh, mostly during menses.



### **DON'TS**

1. Do not throw used sanitary pads/menses cloths in the WC, toilet pit, and toilet floor.



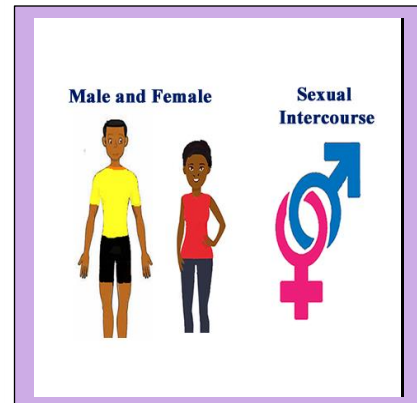
2. Do not throw used sanitary pad/menses cloth on a rubbish pile or in the bush.



## LESSON TWO

### SEXUAL ACTIVITIES AND SEXUAL RISK BEHAVIOUR

The term **Sex** may mean different things. In one setting, sex may tell gender. That is male and female, or a boy and girl. Sex may also refer to sexual intercourse (a sex act). In this lesson, sex stands for a sex act.



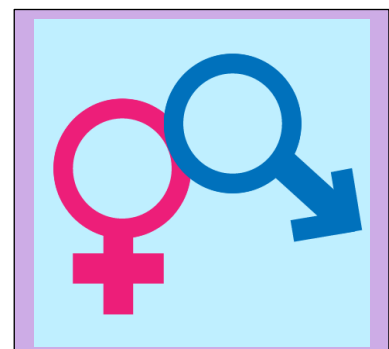
A sex act (known as sleeping with someone in the local language) is an act of **Lovemaking** between male and female adults or man and wife. It is also an act of childbearing. Boys and girls of your age do not understand much about Love. So, if you go into a personal friendship to have sex, it is only for **Lust** and not **Love**.



### Types and Forms of Sexual Activities

Sexual activities can be grouped into two. They are:

1. Outercourse





2. A sex act



### What is Outercourse?

Outercourse includes acts such as:

1. Cuddling



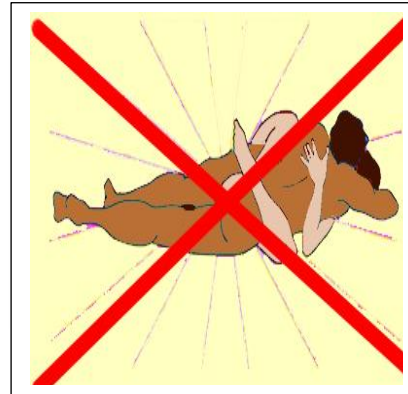
2. Kissing



3. Rubbing against each other with cloths on.



#### 4. Masturbating each other or fingering.



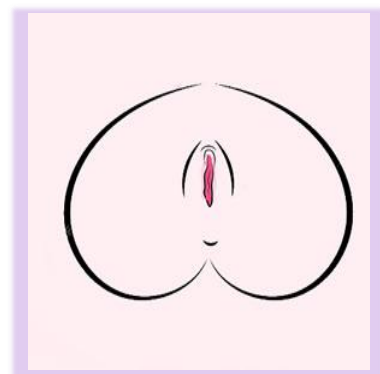
The acts named above usually happen between male and female adult or man and wife.

#### What is a Sex Act?

A sex act involves pushing the male's penis into the vagina of a female. Also, a sex act may take different forms. They are:



1. **Vaginal sex/intercourse** (sex through the vagina) It involves pushing the penis or anything that looks like the penis into the female's vagina.



2. **Anal sex/intercourse** (sex through the anus). It also involves pushing the penis or anything that looks like the penis into the anus of another person.



**3. Oral Sex** (sex through the mouth). It happens when a female puts a male's penis into her mouth or when a male licks any part of the female sex organ.



Oral and anal sex are not safe. They increase the spread of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). Also, vaginal sex without a condom may lead to unwanted pregnancy and STIs.

## Risks in Sexual Activities

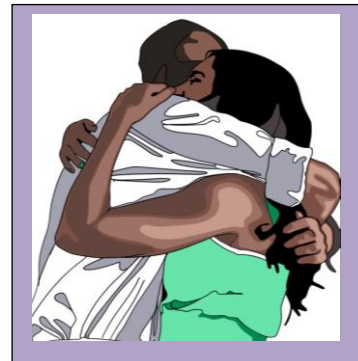
Risks in sexual activities can be grouped into three. They are:

### 1. No-Risk Activities

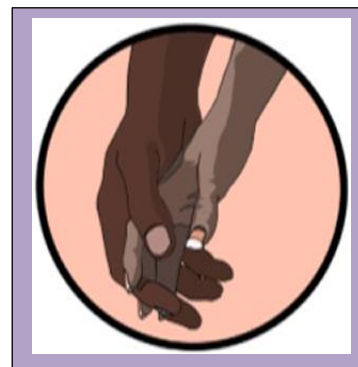


No-risk activities may include:

#### A. Hugging



#### B. Holding of hands



For example, Araba and Kofi are friends who learn and play together without engaging in sexual activities. Araba and Kofi can hold hands and hug each other without falling into sexual health risks.

## 2. Low-Risk Activity

Low-risk sexual activities may include:

- A. Kissing
- B. Massaging each other with cloths on.
- C. Masturbating each other.

These kinds of sexual activities are a bit risky. They can lead to a sex act and the spread of STIs.

## 3. High-Risk Activities

High-risk sexual activities are the main cause of STIs and unwanted pregnancy. They include:

- A. Having sex without a condom.



**B.** Having sex with more than one boy or girl.



**C.** Having sex for money



**D.** Having sex through the anus.



**E.** Having sex with someone who uses hard drugs.



# RAPE AND DEFILEMENT



Rape is forced and unwanted sex. Forced and unwanted sex may include:

- 1. Sexual abuse/defilement.** Abuse happens when a male/female forces someone below age 16 into having sex. Sexual abuse also happens when a person goes into sexual relationship with someone below 16 years.
- 2. Rape.** Rape happens when a male/female forces someone age 16 or more into having sex. Rape or abuse are wrongdoings. The laws of Ghana do not accept them. A person who rapes another is called a rapist.

## What Should I do to Avoid Rape?

**1. Do not** be alone with the opposite sex.



**2. Avoid** petting the opposite sex.



**3. Report** anyone touching your private part to your parents/guardian. Your private parts include those body parts listed in lesson three.

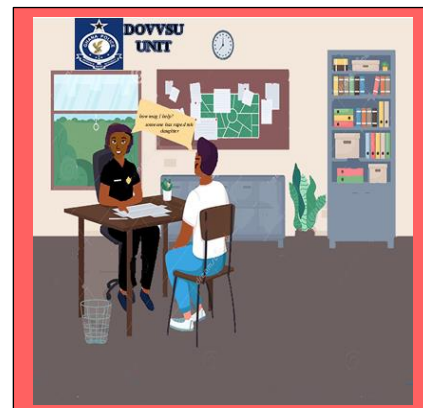
## What is the Right Thing to do if I am Raped?

1. **Protect yourself** by telling your parents/guardian without wasting time.



2. **Do not** pay attention to the threats of the rapist.

3. Let your parents/guardian report the Matter to the police and send you to the hospital.



Your parent can also get help from the **Orange Support Center**.

They can dial the helpline:

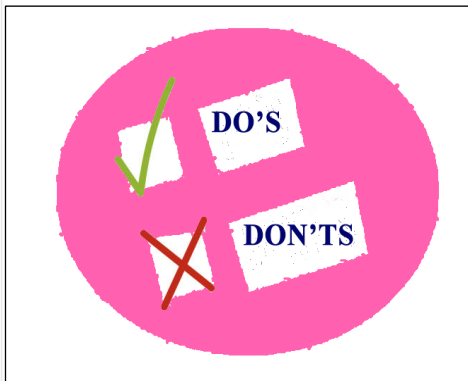
**0800-111-222.**





## LESSON THREE FRIENDSHIP

Young boys and girls make a lot of friends. You can make friends with schoolmates, those in your house, and your community. Let's look at how you may keep such friendships.



Keeping rules in your friendship would help you keep **good morals** and avoid sexual feelings that may lead to **early sexual activities**.

### DO

Friends should help each other and make each other feel good about themselves. You can do the following for your friends:

1. Help your friends when they are going through bad times.
2. If a friend needs someone to talk to, listen to them.
3. Include your friends in the good things you do.
4. Always stand by your friends.
5. Respect and accept your friends for who they are.
6. Avoid people who will put you in danger or make you feel unsafe.
7. Avoid people who will put you down or make you feel worthless.

## Don'ts

1. Don't hide to leave the house to meet a friend. **Tell** your parents/guardian wherever you are going.



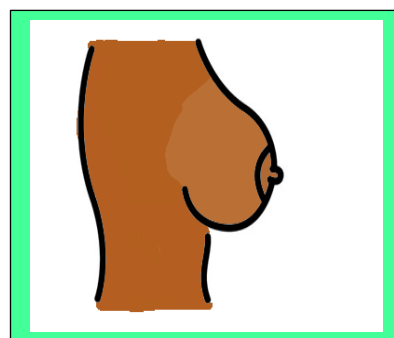
2. **Do** not be alone with a male/female friend.

1. **Do** not touch the private parts of your male/female friend when playing together. Report those who do that to your parents/guardian.

## Which Parts of the Body are Private?

The private parts of a boy/girl are:

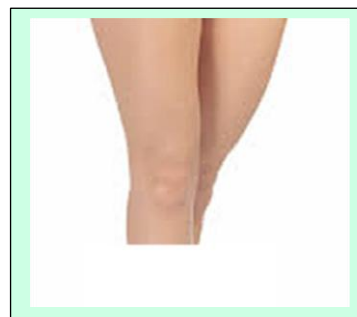
1. Breast



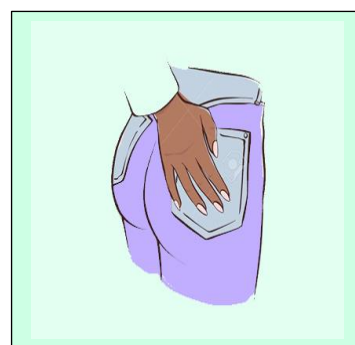
2. Lips



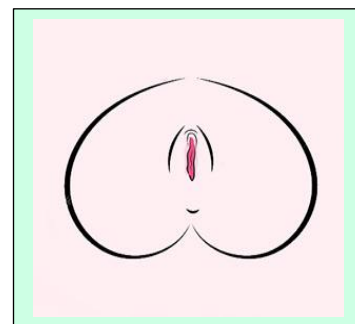
3. Thigh



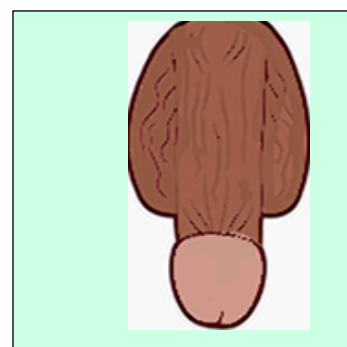
4. Buttocks



5. Vagina



6. Penis



## LESSON FOUR ABSTINENCE/NO SEX



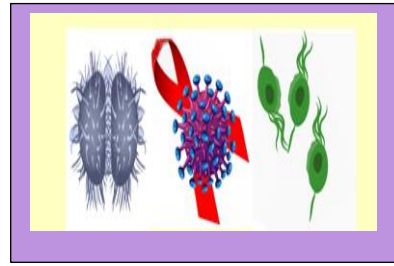
Abstinence (saying no to sexual activities) is the simplest way to prevent pregnancy and some STIs. If a boy and a girl do not have sex, pregnancy cannot occur. Saying no to sex means avoiding all the sexual activities we have learned. For example, Abena and Kwame want to use their time to learn and pass all their exams. So, they have decided not to have sex until they have finished university or learned a trade. Their decision means doing away with all the sexual activities we learned in lesson two. If Abena and Kwame do not stand by their choice, they will fall into many risks. Let's look at some of the risks early sex may bring your way.

### **Early sex will get you pregnant and or affect your health.**

1. Girls who get pregnant at an early age can die during pregnancy or at the time of birth.
2. Others may not be able to deliver the baby on their own. Such girls will have to deliver through operation.



3. Boys/girls who have early sex may get STIs.



**You should know** that some STIs like HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C do not spread through sex alone. You can get them through some other means. See lesson 5 for more on STIs.

### **Early Pregnancy will Affect your Future.**

1. A girl who gets pregnant early may drop out of school.



2. A boy/girl may not be able to learn a trade due to early sex and pregnancy. They would become poor and would not be able to take care of themselves and the baby.



3. Children of young teens may not go to school. They may grow up to become poor.

## Early Pregnancy Brings Shame to Families.

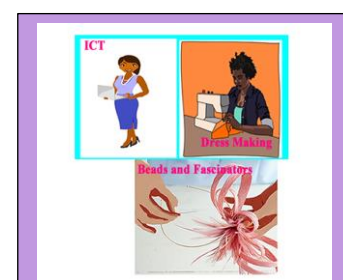
1. Your peers may laugh and tease you. Your parents would feel ashamed of you. Their friends would mock them. They would be called ‘bad parents.’
2. In many cases, boys/men who get girls pregnant leave them to suffer alone. So, girls, be wise.



## Benefits of Saying no to Sex

If you choose not to have sex, you would be able to:

1. Follow your faith.
2. Fully finish school on time.
3. Learn a trade.



4. Follow the good guidance of your parents.



5. Wait to find the right guy/girl.

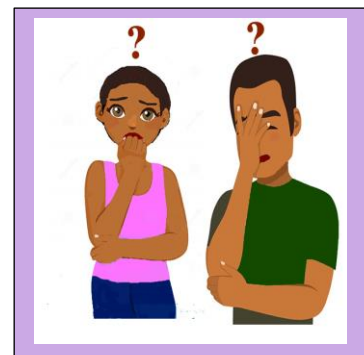


6. Be with a guy/girl without the troubles of early sex.

## Tips to Overcome your Sexual Feelings.

### Follow the Tips below:

1. **Think** about what can happen to you if you follow your sexual feelings.



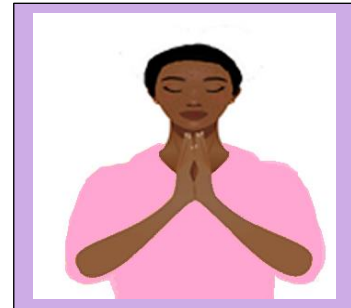
2. Avoid watching porn pictures and videos (locally called porno). Not all porn videos and pictures are real.



3. Be careful with the use of social media.



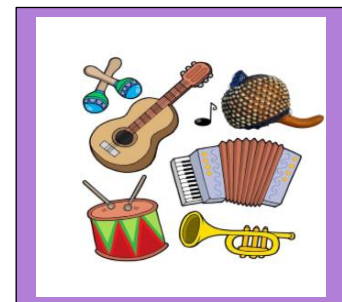
4. Pray always if you believe in prayer.



5. Choose your friends wisely.

Direct your sexual desires to do something better, such as:

1. Playing musical instruments



2. Learning a trade



3. Playing football, etc.





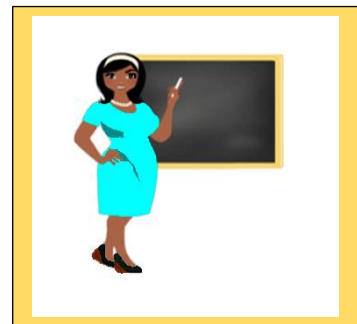
## Support to Overcome Sexual Desires

It is natural for a young boy/girl to have sexual feelings. You will feel this way because at puberty your body starts to make hormones that makes you feel for sex. If you have trouble overcoming your desire, you may ask the following people for advice.

1. A Family Planning Nurse



2. The Girl Child Educator



3. The School Counselors



If you want to know more about puberty, how to say no to sex, and STIs, check out the following sources for more help.

1. The internet



2. Books



3. Magazines



4. Leaflets



You can also check social media handles for some help.  
The social media handle may include:

1. Facebook



## 2. YouTube



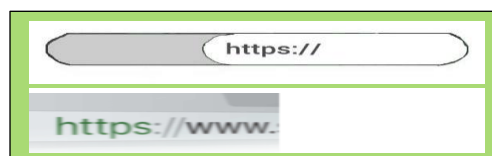
You can also get guidance from the websites of **Groups** that give advice and guidance to teens, such as:

1. Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG)
2. Teens Health
3. Young Men's Health
4. Safe Teens
5. Other helpful websites

### **How do I Tell the Website I have Visited Gives Safe Advice and Guidance?**

There are two basic checks you can make about safe websites. They are:

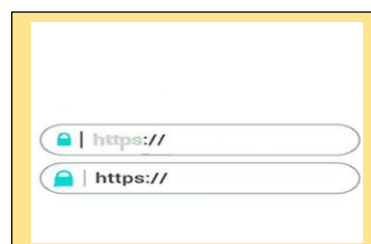
1. The URL addresses.



2. The padlock signs.



All websites have URL addresses that begin with 'http.' safe websites that give safe advice have URL addresses in this form: 'https' or padlock followed by 'https'.



## LESSON FIVE SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIs)

STIs means Sexually Transmitted Infections. STIs are sicknesses/illnesses that usually spread through unsafe sexual acts. We shall look at a few of them.



CHLAMYDIA



SYPHILIS



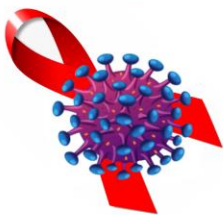
GONORRHEA



YEAST INFECTION



TRICHOMONIASIS



HIV/AIDS

## Syphilis

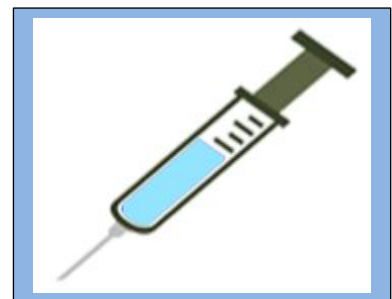


## Syphilis

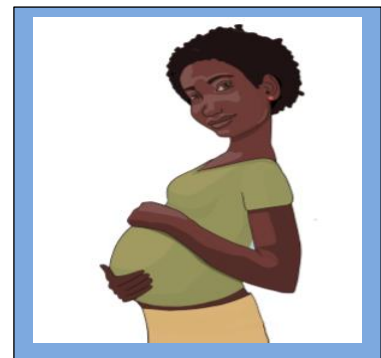
An STI bacterial (germ) causes syphilis. You can get syphilis by having oral, anal, and vaginal sex without a condom. Usually, syphilis spreads through contact with a syphilis sore. It is hard for someone to see the sore. So those who have syphilis may not know they have it until they test for it.

You can also get syphilis in the following ways:

1. Sharing injection needles.



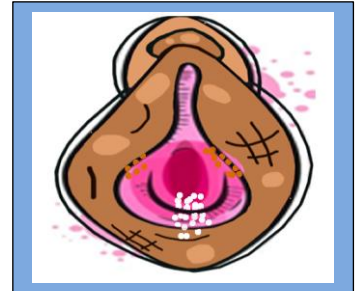
2. A girl/woman living with syphilis can pass it on to her baby at birth and during pregnancy.



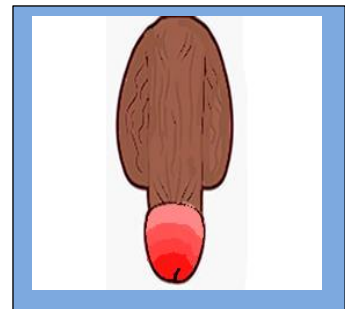
## How do I Know I have Syphilis?

Not all people will show symptom (signs) of syphilis. Yet, others may show the signs below.

1. Girls/women may have sores around and inside the vagina.



2. Boys/men may have sores around their penis.



The signs below may also show three weeks after a person has had syphilis.



**Feeling ill**  
**Fever**  
**Headache**  
**Weight loss**  
**Rashes on palms**  
**hands and feet.**

## **When and how can I test for syphilis?**

If you have the habit of engaging in sex acts with boys/men or girls/women with many girlfriends/boyfriends, you need to test often to know whether you have syphilis. Check at least every two months.



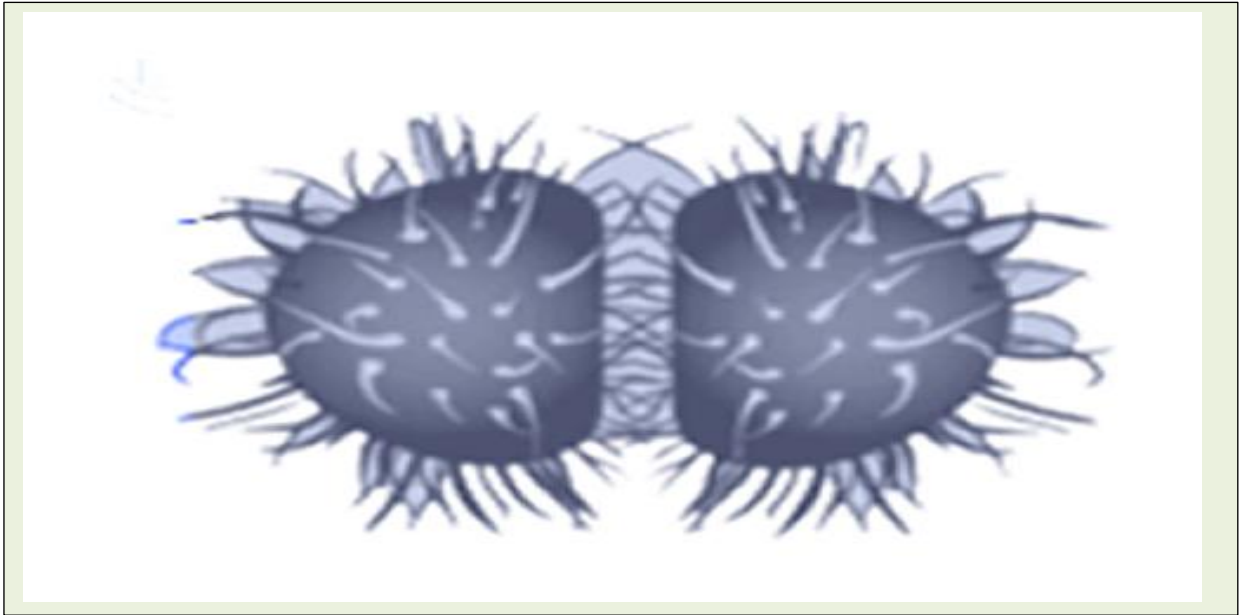
## **How is Syphilis Treated?**

If you feel/see the signs of Syphilis, do the following:

1. Tell your parents/guardian about the signs you have.
2. Let your parents/guardian take you to the hospital for treatment.



## Gonorrhea



Gonorrhea (locally called gono) is an infection (illness) caused by an STI germ. You can get gonorrhea by having sex with someone who has the illness without a condom. You can also get it if you have anal sex with someone who has gonorrhea. The gonorrhea germ can live only in wet places in the body. The wet areas may include the eye, the throat, and the vagina.

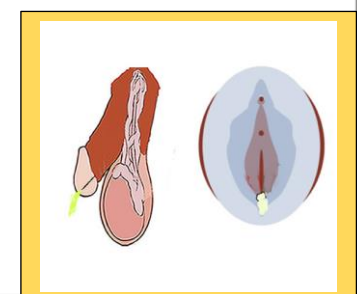
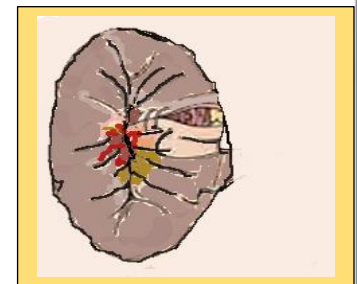
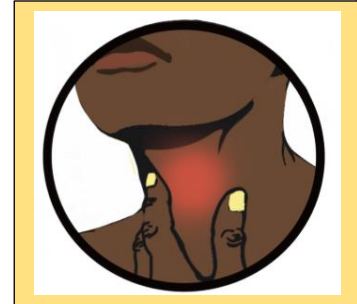
If any of the wet places in your body come into contact with other body parts carrying the gonorrhea germ, you can get the illness. A pregnant girl/woman living with gonorrhea can pass it on to her baby at birth and during pregnancy. The danger is that you can easily get the illness.



## How do I know I have gonorrhoea?

The following signs will show in your body within 14 days of having gonorrhoea.

1. Sore throat (gonorrhoea in the throat).
2. Pain, anal discharge and bleeding (gonorrhoea in the anus).
3. Redness, itching, or discharge of the eyes (gonorrhoea in the eye).
4. Girls will feel pain in the lower part of their stomach.
5. Girls will have vaginal discharge, and boys will also see yellow or green color discharge from their penis.

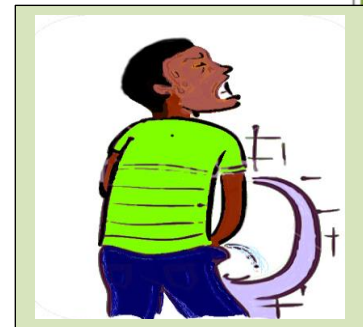


6. Girls will have pains during sex, and boys will feel pain and swelling in one of their testicles.

7. Girls will have a burning feeling when urinating.



8. Boys will have burning feelings when urinating.



### **How is Gonorrhoea Treated?**

There is a treatment for gonorrhoea. So, when you see signs of the illness, follow the tips for treating syphilis.

1. First, talk to your parents/guardian about it.



2. Ask them to take you to see a doctor for testing and treatment.

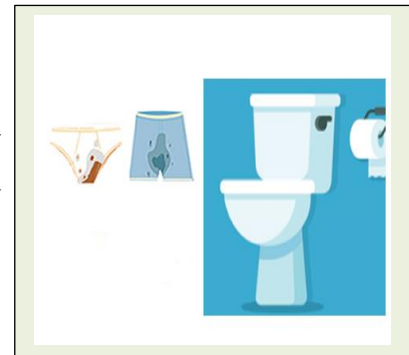


## Vaginal Yeast Infection

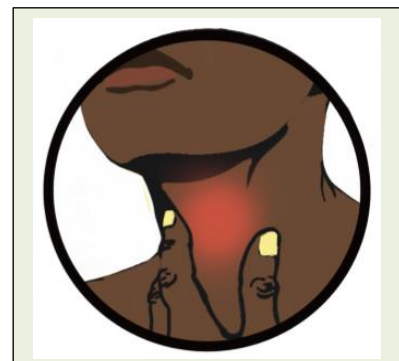
Vaginal yeast (also known as White) is an illness caused by the germ called **Candida**. Vaginal yeast is not part of the list of STIs. The germ already lives in the vagina of females. But when it grows more than is needed, it becomes illness to the vagina. Vaginal yeast also infect many girls during their first sexual act. Boys/men can also be carriers of the candida germ.



Girls can also get the vaginal yeast by using panties and WCs/toilets stained by the candida germ.



The candida germ can live in the throat if a person engages in oral sex with another who has the illness.



## How do I Know I have the Vaginal Yeast Illness (White)?

The following signs will show:

### SIGNS OF WHITE

**Vaginal itching**

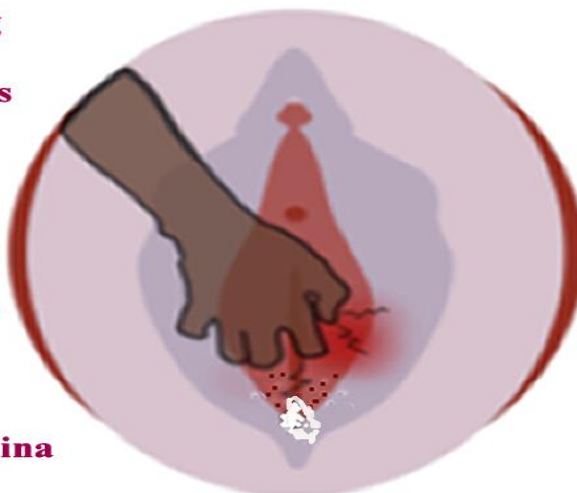
**Burning feelings  
in the vagina**

**Redness of  
the vagina**

**Vaginal rashes**

**Odorless and  
Cheese-like  
fluid from the vagina**

**More vaginal fluid**

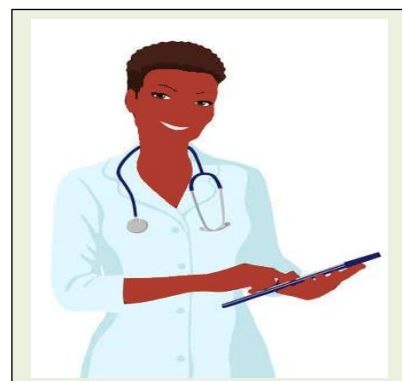


## How do I Treat Vaginal Yeast Illness?

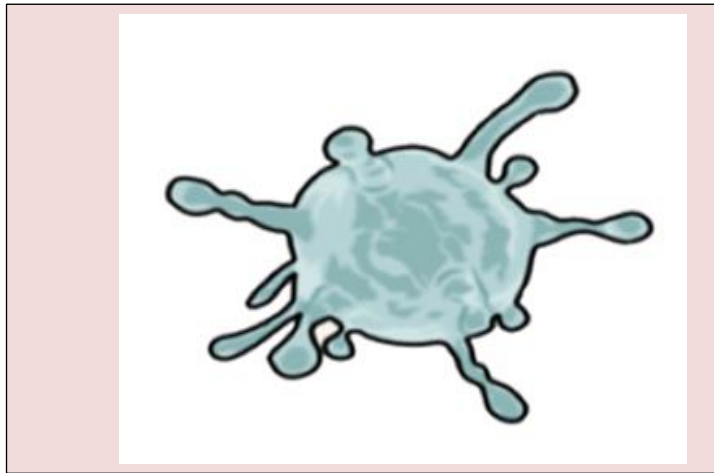
1. Tell your parents/guardian about it. They can buy you medicine from the pharmacy.



2. If you have signs of vaginal yeast after using medicines from the pharmacy, you will have to see a doctor.



## Chlamydia Infection

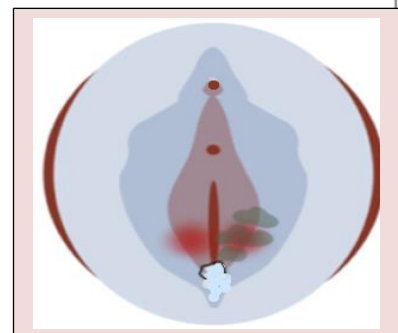


Chlamydia (Chlam, as you may want to call it) is an illness caused by an STI germ. You can get the germ by having vaginal sex without a condom. You can also get chlamydia when you have sex through the anus of someone living with the illness. The chlamydia germ can also live in your throat if you have oral sex with someone who has the illness. The sad thing is that you do not feel or see any sign when you get chlamydia.

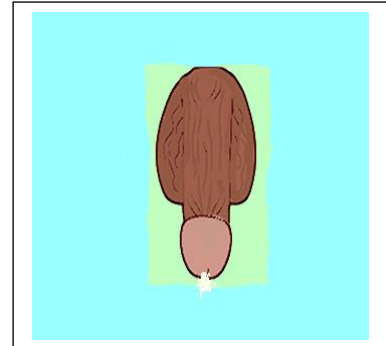
### How do I Know I have Chlamydia?

Very few people show signs when they have chlamydia. The signs of the illness will show three weeks after getting the germ.

1. Girls will have water-like fluid, which has a bad smell from the vagina.



2. Boys will see milky fluid coming from the penis. They will feel pains in their testis too.



3. Both boys and girls will have burning feelings when urinating.



### How is Chlamydia Treated?

1. You will only know you have the illness when you **test** for it.

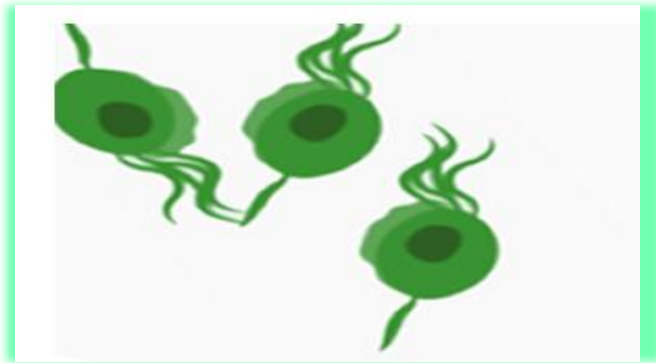


2. To test for it, you must **tell your parents/guardian** to take you to see a doctor.



It would help if you **told the doctor** clearly about the signs to give you the proper test and treatment.

## Trichomoniasis



Trichomoniasis (Tricho, as you may want to call it.) is an illness caused by the STI germ called **Trichomoniasis**. It affects the urine tube (urethra) and the penis. Trichomoniasis also infects the vagina and the vulva but not the other parts of the body. People who have the illness may not show or feel any signs. But the following signs may show in others:

**5.** Girls who have trichomoniasis will see yellow or green color fluid in their vagina. The fluid usually smells bad.



**6.** Both boys and girls may feel pains when urinating.

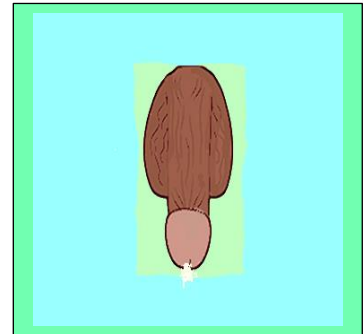


**7.** Girls may bleed after having sex.





**8.** Boys may also itch and have penis discharge. They may have pains after having sex.



### **How Does Trichomoniasis Spread?**

1. You can easily get the illness if you have the habit of having sex with more than one boy/man or one girl/woman.



2. Also, you can get trichomoniasis by having sex with someone who has the illness without a condom.

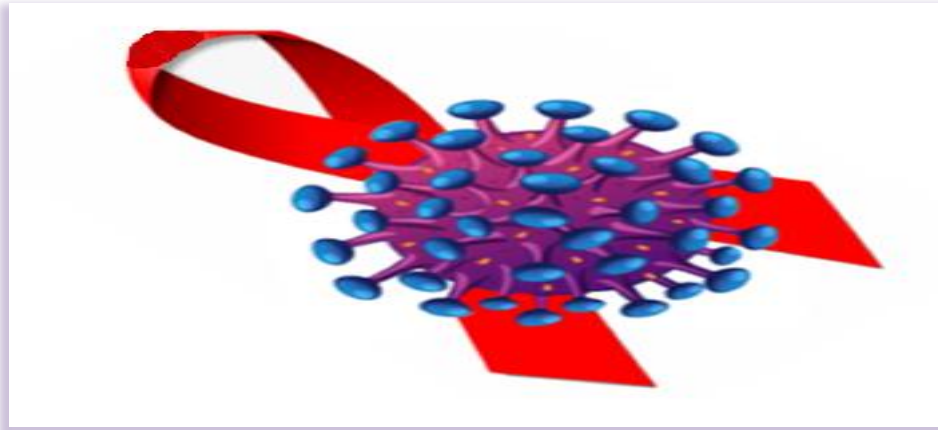


### **How is this Illness Treated?**

There is a treatment for this illness. When you have signs of the illness, follow the tips provided for treating syphilis or the other STIs.



## HIV/AIDS

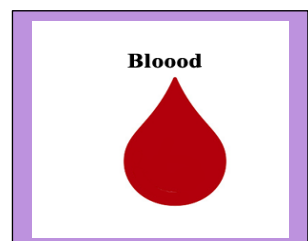


HIV is caused by a germ called Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). This virus affects the body's defense against illness. If you do not treat HIV, it worsens and becomes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). HIV has no cure. Once a person gets HIV, it will remain with them for life. The good news is that those with HIV can live with it for a long time. You can take medicines to stop the HIV germ from harming you. The medication can make an HIV person live a healthy life and reduce the spread of HIV.

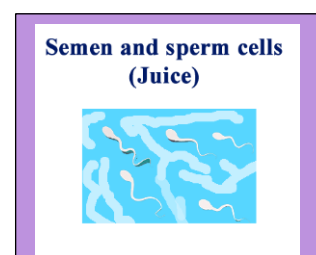
### How does HIV Spread?

1. HIV spreads through body fluids such as:

A. Blood



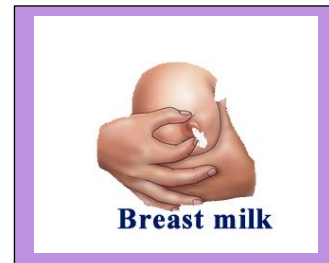
B. Semen and sperm cells (locally called Juice)



C. Vagina fluid



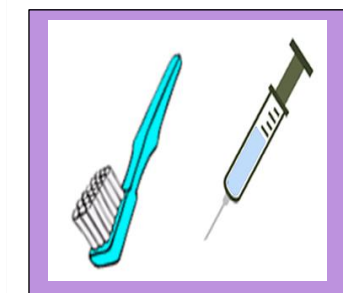
D. Breast milk.



2. You can have HIV when you have vaginal or anal sex with an HIV person without a condom.



3. You can have HIV when you share needles, syringes, or toothbrushes with others who have HIV.



4. Women/girls living with HIV can pass it on to their babies during pregnancy and childbirth.



## How do I know I have HIV?

The following signs will show in people who have HIV.



## How to Live with HIV?

Some people may feel the signs of HIV 2-4 weeks after getting the HIV germ. Others will show signs months after having the germ. The signs of HIV may last for a few days or many days. When you feel or see the signs, it does not mean you have HIV. You can know you have HIV by testing for HIV.



You can live with HIV by getting HIV medications from the hospital.



You can stop the spread of HIV.

3. Tell your parents/guardian and boyfriend/girlfriend you have HIV.



4. Pregnant girls/women who have HIV will have to seek care from the hospital. Seeking care during pregnancy will prevent your baby from getting HIV.



## LESSON SIX WAYS TO AVOID STIS AND PREGNANCY

Some young people may not be able to check their sexual feelings. If after seeking advice and guidance, you cannot control your sexual desires, you can practice safe sex. It means the use of condoms and other ways of avoiding pregnancy. The pictures below represent the many ways by which you can avoid pregnancy and STIs. Let's consider them one after the other in the pages that follow.



## Condom

A condom is a soft rubber-like material. It is worn on the penis or inserted in the vagina before sex. A condom helps prevent STIs and pregnancy. Yet, you should know that condoms are not always reliable. It can tear during sex if it is expired. **There are male and female** condoms. You can get a condom from any drug store, a pharmacy, or a family planning center.

To keep and use a condom safely, follow the tips below.

1. Do not keep a condom in your pocket or purse. The condom can get warm and tear during a sex act.



2. Do not use oils and creams to oil the vagina.

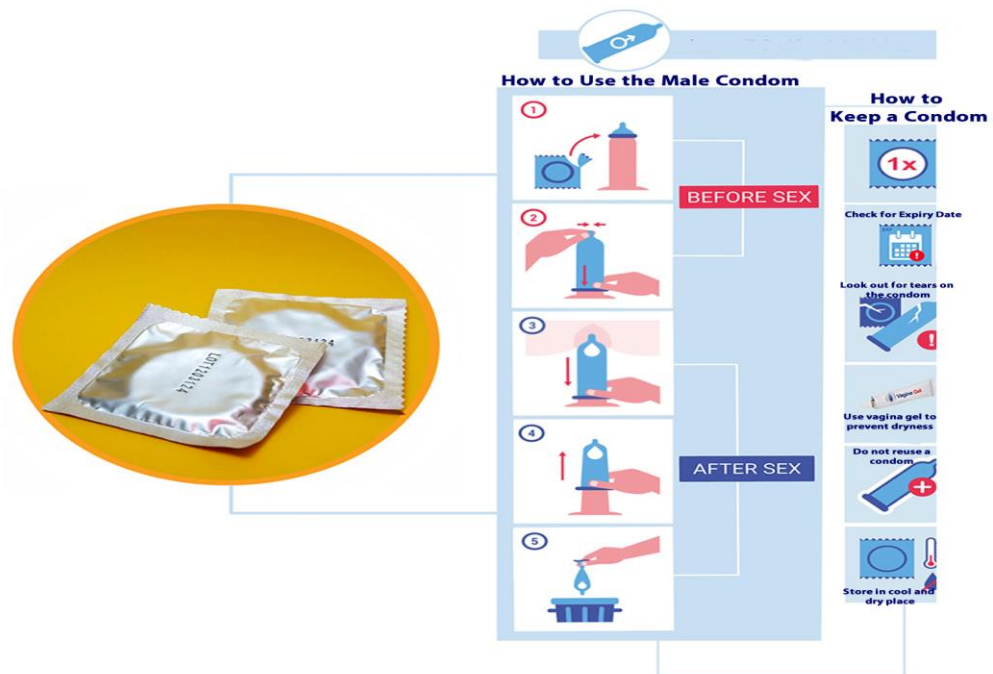


3. Instead, use vagina gel to avoid dryness of the vagina.





You can follow the steps below anytime you want to wear the male condom.



Females should hold the outside of a female condom at closed end. Press sides of inner ring together with fingers and insert into vagina.

The longest finger should then be used to push the ring as far into the vagina. Some of the condom will hang and show outside of the vagina. Make sure that the penis is inside the condom and not between the condom and the vaginal wall.



Do not keep a used condom for reuse. Instead, put on a new condom for the next round of sex.

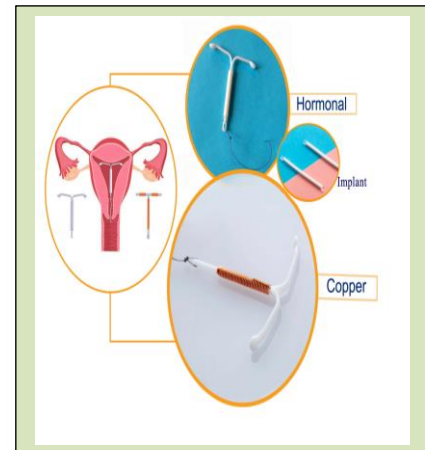
## Other Ways to Prevent Pregnancy

You can get the items for preventing pregnancy from the family planning or family health units in hospitals, health centers, clinics, and adolescent corners. You can also get it from workplaces like PPAG and Marie Stopes clinics in Ghana. There are long-term and short-term ways to avoid pregnancy. Let's look at them.

### Long-Term Ways to Avoid Pregnancy

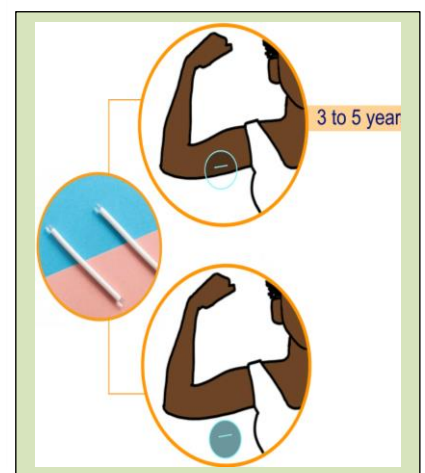
Among girls/women, there are ways to avoid pregnancy over a very long period. They include:

1. Implant
2. Intrauterine Devices (IUDs)



### Implant

The implant is a plastic rod that looks like a matchstick. The implant is inserted under the skin of the upper arm. Once inserted, it can remain in the upper arm between 3 and 5 years. The implant does not prevent STIs.





## IUDs

IUDs are womb devices. They are placed in a girl/woman's womb to stop her from getting pregnant. There are hormonal and copper IUDs. When placed in the womb, it can remain there for 5 to 10 years. It can be removed anytime the girl/woman wants to get pregnant.

You should know that IUDs do not prevent STIs.



## Short-term Ways to Avoid Pregnancy

They are oral medicines and injections used in a short time to avoid pregnancy. They include:

1. **The Emergency Pills** – you can take this pill within three days or 72 hours after having sex. Do not use this pill every time you have sex. You can use it only when sex happens by accident.



## 2. The Regular Daily Pill.

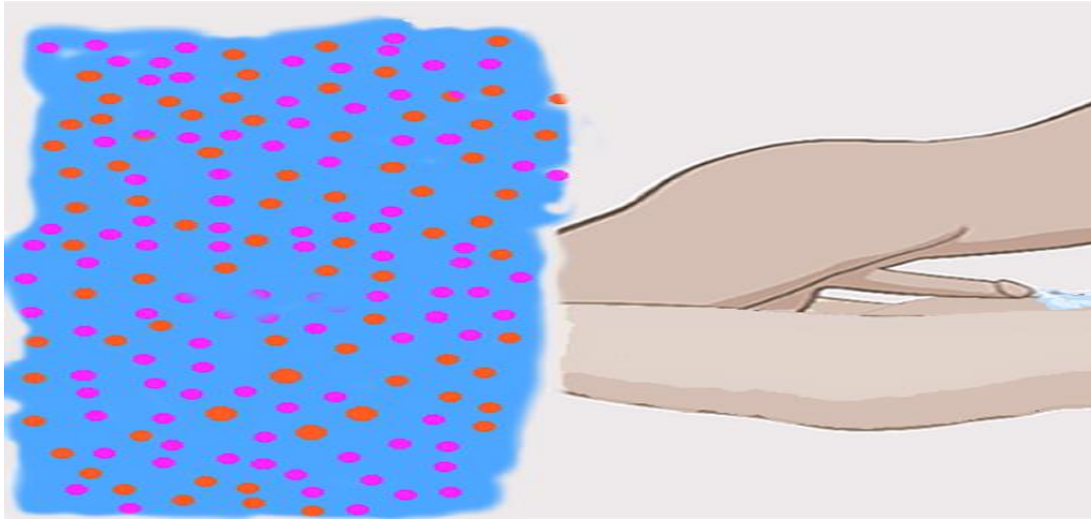


There are many kinds of daily pill. To make it work; you have to take one pill daily. It is used in the following ways based on the type:

- Once every day for 21days.
- Once every day for 28 days.
- Once every day for 90 days.

Please talk to a family planning nurse or a doctor to know which pill to take. Remember that all the long and short-term ways to avoid pregnancy do not prevent STIs.

## The Withdrawal Method



Withdrawal is one of the ways to avoid pregnancy. The penis is removed from the vagina and away from the female sex organ before the semen and sperm is released. If some semen drops on the vulva and has sperms, it can enter the vagina for the girl/woman to get pregnant. The withdrawal method does not always prevent pregnancy because it is hard to pull out the penis before the semen comes out. In many cases, some small amount of sperm will get into the vagina when the penis is pulled out, which may bring about pregnancy. You should know that this method does not prevent STIs.

## **Summary**

I believe you now have a good understanding of yourselves as young teens. You understand the changes in your body and what you need to do. You have also learned about sexual activities and the dangers involved in sexual activities, including STIs. You are also encouraged to say no to sexual activities. However, for those who want to have sex no matter what, you can practice safe sex by using a condom. You may also use any of the methods for preventing pregnancy learned in lesson six. You may also use any of the methods for preventing pregnancy learned in lesson six.

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