

Headline
Date
MediaTitle
Section
Journalist
Frequency
ADValue

Important to be aware
16 Jul 2009
New Straits Times
Supplement
N/A
Daily
8,283

Language
Page No
Article Size
Color
PRValue

English
N3
280 cm²
Full Color
24,848



Important to be aware

By Manpreet Sandhu 14, Kuala Lumpur

Say STDs and immediately everyone thinks it is a bad word. But, says Dr Premitha Damodaran, a consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist: "... it is important to know about them."

Since the risk of getting an STD is so high, she feels that people, especially youngsters, need to be aware of the dangers of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

Why is it dangerous? "It can be transmitted easily."

According to Dr Premitha, you can get an STD through oral kissing, oral sex, anal sex and vaginal sex. It can even be passed on when you are pregnant, and you can get it even through a non-sexual route.

"The most common STDs in Malaysia are herpes, HIV/AIDS, chlamydia and syphilis," says Dr Premitha. She calls chlamydia a silent STD because it has no symptoms... only a burning sensation in the vagina.

"If it is left untreated, it can cause fertility problems."

Syphilis, a general STD, can be detected through a test. A pregnant mother suffering from syphilis can pass it on to her baby, causing the child to have nose, teeth or even heart defects.

Beside the pain, discharge, redness and puss, these STDs can also lead to long-term problems.

"Syphilis can cause problems to the heart, blood vessels and brain; Herpes



Dr Premitha Damodaran, consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist.

can cause problems in the mouth, and HIV can cause AIDS," she explained. STDs can also lead to premature babies and miscarriages.

You might be wondering, how do you detect STDs? Well, an STD can be detected through the symptoms and several blood tests.

Can they be cured?

"Some can. Herpes can be cured through anti-viral drugs and antibiotics. The bad news is that syphilis, herpes, HIV and chlamydia never go away. You

have to live with it! Even after you are treated, if your body's immunity drops, you can still get the STD again," she said.

I asked her how regularly are the patients monitored or treated?

"After six weeks or three months. If it comes down, then it's six months... depending on the symptoms.

What can you do to prevent getting STDs? "Don't have sex," she said.

And who are actually at risk of suffering from an STD?

"Well," she replied, "anyone who has sexual relations."

Dr Premitha has advice to give both parents and kids. To all our dear parents, she says, "Open your eyes and look around, because it is happening. Communication with your kids is important. Be aware. It's better to know than to ignore it, and give the right advice!"

To us, she says, "Don't be pressured by your peers. Believe in yourself. A small mistake, can cause a huge problem. And get some information from the right place and don't be afraid to ask".

There you go, information on STDs! Please just stop the myth that says "STDs is a bad word" from going around. It's not a bad word! It is mandatory to know about it... Stay alert, stay ahead, and stay safe. Remember, you can make the difference!