

Handshake activity

LESSON DETAILS

Victorian Curriculum Descriptors

Health and Physical Education

Health and PE E Investigate and select strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing (VCHPEP126)

Time

20 minutes

Equipment

- A rubber glove
- STI teacher information sheet

Key Messages

Whilst there are some specific symptoms of STIs, many STIs have little or no symptoms.

- It is important to get tested for STIs after any unprotected sex.
- Always using a condom is the most effective way of helping to prevent transmission of STIs.

Learning Intention

To highlight and reinforce basic information about Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs) and their transmission.

Teaching Notes

This activity usually causes a lot of excitement and giggling, especially when the students realise the significance of shaking hands. It can be varied in a number of ways; by increasing or decreasing the number of 'sexual partners', by giving detailed information about the STIs or simply by naming them.

Students will often be quick to point out the flaw in the activity; they may not contract an STI if they shook hands with a person before they became infected. Regardless, it is an effective activity to highlight the risks and ease with which STIs could be transmitted.

Note that any people of any gender or sexuality are at risk of contracting an STI with intimate sexual contact. Discussion may include use of other barrier protection such as internal condoms or dams.

Procedure

1. Give a latex glove to one student and ask them to put it on. The glove represents wearing a condom.
2. Ask all students to stand up, move around the room and shake hands with at least three people, remembering who these people are.
3. Introduce the idea that shaking hands in this activity equates to having sex with that person.
4. Choose an STI (e.g. Chlamydia) and tell one student that they have this infection. Ask that student and anyone who shook their hand to sit, as they, too, will have contracted that STI. Then ask those who shook hands with any person sitting to also sit.
5. Repeat the process for another two or three STIs, one at a time.
6. By this stage, almost all students in the class would have contracted at least one STI, except for the person wearing a glove, which represents a condom.

Handshake activity

7. Discuss the ease at which these diseases can spread, the need for an STI check-up in the case of unprotected sex (as most STIs are asymptomatic) and other ways STIs can spread. For example, oral sex, anal sex or ejaculating on broken skin.
8. Discuss how, as a teacher, you didn't shake any hands. Tell students that this is the same as not having sex, (abstinence), for this activity.
9. Discuss how abstinence protects against contracting an STI.
10. Provide information about local sexual health clinics, especially those that are youth-friendly.

Questioning

- If a person has never had sex can they have an STI?
- What is involved in STI test?
- What happens if STIs are not treated?
- How would a person tell their partner that they had an STI?
- What would prevent a person from wearing a condom?
- Would a person use a condom if they were using another type of contraception?
- Do same sex couple need to use condoms / barriers?

Teacher Reference Sheet

Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs) spread predominantly by sexual contact, including vaginal, anal and oral sex. Some STIs can also be spread through non-sexual means such as via blood or blood products. They fall in to 3 main categories:

- **Viral-** Once a person has a virus they live with the virus for their lives and manage any symptoms the virus presents.
- **Bacterial-** If untreated, bacterial STIs can cause damage to a person's fertility and general health. Once diagnosed, bacterial infections can be treated with antibiotics.
- **Parasites-** Tiny organisms which can be passed to another person through intimate contact. Medication is available for treatment.

Here are some common examples of STIs:

Name:	Herpes Simplex Virus-HSV
What is it:	Virus
Symptoms:	Often no symptoms. Tingling, itchy pimples or blisters. Can reoccur at times of stress
How to test:	Blood test
Treatment	Anti-herpetic medication, to manage it. No drug to cure it

Name:	Human Papilloma Virus-HPV
What is it:	Virus
Symptoms:	Can cause warts, though can carry virus without presenting with warts. 200 types of HPV (2 are associated with 80% of cervical cancer in Australia)
How to test:	Clinical diagnosis Pap smear for cervical changes associated with cervical cancer. This is not an STI check
Treatment	Remove warts

Name:	HIV
What is it:	Virus which attacks the immune system
Symptoms:	Shortly after infection, flu-like symptoms may occur, though many have no symptoms for years
How to test:	Blood test
Treatment	Treatments are available to improve the length and quality of life

Name:	Chlamydia
--------------	------------------

Handshake activity

What is it:	Bacteria which lives in urethra, cervix, rectum and throat
Symptoms:	Women: 70-90% show no symptoms Men: 50% show no symptoms
How to test:	Urine sample
Treatment	Antibiotics

Name:	Gonorrhoea
What is it:	Bacteria
Symptoms:	Not always symptomatic
How to test:	Blood test
Treatment	Antibiotics

Name:	Syphilis
What is it:	Bacteria
Symptoms:	Not always symptomatic
How to test:	Blood test
Treatment	Antibiotics

Name:	Trichomoniasis
What is it:	Parasite
Symptoms:	Not always symptomatic. Possibly causes itching or discharge in genitals.
How to test:	Urine or swab sample
Treatment	Antibiotics

This information was correct on publication. Any changes to information or practice will be posted on the Sexual Health Victoria website at www.shvic.org.au.