

The worst gifts aren't returnable

Stay protected on V-Day to avoid risks of diseases

Valentine's Day is around the corner, and those couples who are sexually active need to be safe and make sure to use protection. Besides the risk of getting pregnant, another dangerous risk is STDs.

STD stands for sexually transmitted disease.

There are many types of STDs such as gonorrhea, Chlamydia, syphilis, herpes, and HIV/AIDS, but many students know little about them. In fact, the limited knowledge many students possess borders on ridiculous. Students typically believe the obvious. "They itch," said a junior boy. "It burns when you go to the bathroom," said another student.

Besides the obvious

itching and burning, there is a lot more to STDs. Many common symptoms of STDs are slight fevers, body aches, and abnormal discharge from "private areas."

Though most STDs can be treated with medication, there are some that don't go away. Genital Herpes

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and HIV/AIDS are incurable. Herpes are small sores on the genital area. The sores

may clear up for a short period of time, but the virus is still there and the sores will come back.

HIV/AIDS is a blood disease and is the most deadly of all STDs.

Symptoms may take up to 10 years to show. Symptoms include low grade fevers and night sweats. Other symptoms may include red, brown, black, or purplish sores under the skin or in the mouth. For women, constant severe yeast infections may be a sign of the disease. HIV/AIDS is eventually fatal, but with modern medicine the HIV virus can be contained and people can live longer now than they could 20 years ago.

More important than knowing that a person has

an STD is telling his/her partner. Many people are too embarrassed to admit they have one or even build up the courage to get checked. "If I got checked for an STD and was cleared I wouldn't tell my partner I went to get checked," said a junior boy. If people get checked out right away, and are caught in the early stages, these diseases can be easily cleared up or contained.

But don't let this information scare you. According Nebraska Health and Human Services statistics, there were only two cases of STDs in Jefferson County, as of 2007. "STDs are 100% preventable. Just have one partner and talk with them," said a junior girl. - **Thomas Horky**


STD SYMPTOMS

- abnormal discharge
- abdominal pain
- small sores
- itching
- burning
- fever
- headaches

INCURABLE STDs

- Genital Herpes
- HIV infection & Aids
- according to pediatrics.about.com

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