

# Northwest Gynecological Oncology

Deborah Dotters, M.D.

Audrey Garrett, M.D. M.P.H.

3355 RiverBend Drive Suite 210.

Springfield Oregon, 97477

Toll Free: (888) 703-8413

Phone: (541) 465-3300

Fax: (541) 686-8330

## HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM STDs

### Are You at Risk?

You are at increased risk of getting an STD if you:

- Have or have had more than one sexual partner
- Have a partner who has or has had more than one sexual partner
- Have sex with someone who has an STD
- Have a history of STDs
- Use intravenous drugs (injected into a vein) or your partner uses intravenous drugs

These factors increase the risk of an STD. Adolescents have a higher risk, and lifestyle factors also can play a role. There are many ways you can reduce your risk of getting an STD:

- Know your sexual partners and limit their number—Your partner's sexual history is as important as your own. The more partners you or your partners have, the higher your risk of getting an STD.
- Use a latex condom—Using a latex condom every time you have vaginal, oral, or anal sex decreases the chances of infection. Condoms lubricated with spermicides do not offer extra protection. Frequent use of some spermicides can increase the risk of HIV.
- Avoid risky sex practices—Sexual acts that tear or break the skin carry a higher risk of STDs. Even small cuts that do not bleed let germs pass back and forth. Anal sex poses a high risk because tissues in the rectum break easily. Body fluids also can carry STDs. Having any unprotected sexual contact with an infected person poses a high risk of getting an STD.
- Get immunized—Vaccinations are available that will help prevent hepatitis B and HPV.

### Finally...

Every woman should know how to protect herself and her partners from STDs. If you think you have an STD, seek medical treatment to avoid long-term health problems.