

GLOSSARY

Welcome to the glossary of program *The World Starts With Me*. Here you will find all the correct explanations for difficult words that you might come across during the lessons.

It also includes a list of health centres where you can go to find more information, youth-friendly services and counselling.

A

Abortion

The termination of a pregnancy. This may happen on its own (spontaneous abortion or 'miscarriage') or it can be the result of a medical procedure (induced abortion). In countries where abortion is illegal, like Malawi, abortion services can be dangerous. If it is not performed by a medical doctor or gynaecologist, it is often done in a rushed and unhygienic manner that puts women's health at great risk. An abortion is safe when it is performed by professional, trained and well-equipped service providers in a hygienic setting.

Abstinence

To avoid doing something. For example, you can decide to abstain from all sexual activities or only from sexual intercourse or from drugs or alcohol. Not engaging in those sexual activities that can put a person at risk of infections, including STIs and HIV, or pregnancy.

Acne

A skin problem experienced mainly during puberty and marked by a lot of pimples or spots, especially in the face. You can use creams and cleansing lotions to treat it.

Adolescence

Adolescence is the period of transition between puberty and adulthood. Adolescence is roughly considered to be the period between 12 and 19 years of age. It refers to the time between the beginning of sexual maturation (puberty) and adulthood. During this period, adolescents are expected to become capable of adult behaviour and response, and autonomous decision-making. Adolescents experience not only physical growth and change but also emotional, psychological, social and mental change and growth.

AIDS

Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome, a fatal disease in which the human immune system is weakened by the HIV virus and cannot guard the individual against any disease-causing organisms, even those that can be treated with drugs. AIDS is the final stage of an infection with the HIV virus (Human Immuno-deficiency Virus), which is transmitted through blood and bodily fluids (semen and vaginal fluids). AIDS in itself is not the cause of death. People who die of AIDS actually die of other infections to which the body does not have any resistance as a result of its weakened immune system.

Anal sex

Sexual intercourse not via the vagina, but via the anus of the partner (male or female). Anal intercourse without a condom is an extremely high-risk behaviour for the spread of HIV and STIs. Blood vessels in the anal opening may rupture and blood may mingle with semen of a partner with STI or HIV.

Anaemia

A health condition in which the blood is 'weak and thin'. It is often caused by lack of oxygen in body cells and organs, which can result in tiredness, pale gums, tongue, eyelids, palms and soles of the feet, and lack of energy and fainting.

Antenatal

The period before birth. For example, antenatal care is the care needed by a woman throughout her pregnancy.

Anus

The opening of the body where food waste (faeces) comes out.

Antiseptic soaps

Soaps that contain a medical substance that prevents the growth of bacteria. Antiseptics are used to prevent infections.

Assertiveness

To state something clearly, confidently and strongly without being hostile, rude or nasty. To assert yourself is to stand up and speak out for yourself.

Attitude

Feeling or opinion about something or someone, or a way of behaving that follows from this feeling or opinion.

Autonomy

To freely determine your own decisions and course in life. This implies freedom of thought, expression and action. Our autonomy is limited by the right of others to have autonomy. It is a rights-based concept.

B**Barrier method**

A birth control method that provides a physical barrier between the sperm cells in semen and the egg. Examples of barrier contraceptive methods include condoms, diaphragms, foam, sponges, spermicides and cervical caps. Except for condoms, barrier methods do not prevent STIs, including HIV.

Behaviour

The manner of conducting yourself; the response of individuals or groups to their environment.

Birth canal

The passageway - made up of the cervix, vagina and vulva - through which the baby travels during birth.

Bisexual

A person who is sexually attracted to both genders.

Bisexuality

A sexual orientation in which an individual can enjoy emotional and sexual relationships with people of both genders.

C**Caesarean section (or C-section)**

A medical operation to take the baby out of the uterus by making a cut in the woman's abdomen (belly). This operation is performed when a woman is not able to deliver the baby through the vagina and vulva.

Calendar method

A traditional method of natural family planning (also known as rhythm method). The fertile phase (the days around the ovulation when an mature egg cell is present) of the menstrual cycle must be determined by calculating the length of at least six previous menstrual cycles. To prevent pregnancy, this method requires not having sexual intercourse during the calculated fertile days of a woman's menstrual cycle. When used alone, the calendar method is very unreliable, especially for girls and women with irregular menstrual cycles, and may be overly restrictive for some couples. This method does not prevent STIs, including HIV.

Candidiasis

A yeast infection in the vagina. Symptoms of candidiasis are: increased discharge from the vagina and itching. It is an infection but not an STI.

Caressing

To touch or kiss someone in a gentle and loving way.

Cervical Cap

A small, plastic or rubber cup that covers the cervix to prevent sperm cells from entering the uterus and thus meeting the egg to unite (one of the so-called barrier methods). It is used with spermicide. It is very effective at preventing pregnancy and must be prescribed and instructed by a health care provider. It does not prevent STIs, including HIV.

Cervix

The neck/opening of the uterus, that extends and opens into the vagina.

Child Abuse

The sexual and emotional violation of a child by an adult, through verbal, visual, psycho-social or physical acts, abusing the relationship of power and authority that adults have over children.

Child pornography

Any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child, with the aim of presenting an image for sexual purposes.

Chlamydia

An STI caused by bacteria that often has no symptoms. If symptoms occur, they may include burning during urination, discharge and bleeding during intercourse for girls. For boys, common symptoms include pain during urination and a watery discharge. Chlamydia can cause infertility and ectopic pregnancy if it is not treated early. Because Chlamydia is a bacterial infection, it can easily be treated with antibiotics. Ectopic pregnancy is when the embryo starts developing in the fallopian tube.

Circumcision

In a man: when the loose fold of skin (foreskin) at the end of a man's penis is removed.
In a woman: when parts or all of a woman's genitals are removed, also known as FGM.

Clitoris

The small, pea-shaped organ in a woman's genitals that is a centre of sensation and sexual pleasure. It is located at the top of the vulva, between the inner lips, just in front of the opening of the urethra.

Coercion

Forcing a person to do something.

Coitus

See Intercourse.

Coitus interruptus

A very unreliable contraceptive method whereby a boy withdraws his penis from his partner's vagina just before ejaculation (also known as pulling out or withdrawal). It is not recommended at all. This method does not protect against STIs, including HIV.

Coming Out

The process in which a person acknowledges and discloses being gay, lesbian or transgender.

Conception

Beginning of pregnancy, when the male sperm cells fertilize the female egg.

Condom

A sheath of latex rubber worn on the erect penis during sexual intercourse (also called rubber or protector). The condom must be put on before the penis touches any part of the woman's external genitals to prevent the mixing of semen with either the vaginal, oral or anal regions. It is the most effective and safe contraceptive method to prevent pregnancy, HIV, and other STIs.

Contraceptives

Methods used to prevent pregnancy (also known as birth control or family planning methods).

Cowper's Glands

A pair of glands in the male reproductive system, responsible for secreting the fluid that makes up pre-ejaculate (pre-cum). Another name for it is seminal vesicles.

Cyber Sex

Sexual encounters that take place entirely on the Internet, often in chatrooms.

D**Date rape**

Rape committed by a boyfriend. For example, when a boyfriend forces his girlfriend to have sex against her will, this is considered date rape.

Diaphragm

A dome-shaped rubber cup (also called cervical cap) used in conjunction with spermicidal gel/cream that covers the opening to the cervix and uterus to prevent sperm cells from entering the uterus. It is effective at preventing pregnancy but does not protect against STIs, including HIV.

Double Bagging

Refers to using two condoms instead of one. Using two condoms is generally not recommended because they can rub against each other and tear. The best policy is to use one latex condom, correctly and consistently.

E**Ejaculation**

The release of semen containing sperm cells (if the man has not been sterilized) from a man's penis. If the man is sterilized, the semen does not contain sperm cells. Rhythmic contractions in males that propel the semen out of the penis in spurts.

Embryo

The term used between the second and eighth week of pregnancy to refer to the mass of cells that will become a foetus and, after birth, a baby.

Emergency contraception

A contraceptive method that can be used to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sexual intercourse, for example, if the condom broke or slipped. To be effective in preventing pregnancy, emergency contraception must be taken within 72 hours of unprotected sexual intercourse. Emergency contraception does not cause abortion and does not prevent STIs, including HIV. It is a tablet which you can get anonymously at a pharmacy in Malawi.

Endometrium

The lining of the uterus that grows to receive a fertilized egg, and if there is no fertilized egg, is shed as menstruation.

Epididymis

A coiled tube through which sperm cells leave the testes, also used for storage of sperm cells.

Erection

When the penis is being filled with blood and becomes hard and stiff, either as a result of feelings of sexual excitement or spontaneously.

Erogenous zones

The areas of the male and female body that are specially sensitive and capable of arousing sexual desire and pleasure

Erotic

Sexually stimulating, pertaining to sexual love or sensation.

Exhibitionism

The compulsive act of exposing the genitals, in public or to a specific person, for the purpose of sexual arousal and gratification.

F**Fallopian tubes**

The two tubes that lead from the female ovaries to the uterus (womb). After an egg has been released from one of the ovaries, it travels down these tubes to the uterus and can be fertilized by a sperm cell.

Family planning

Family planning means planning how to improve the quality of family life. It includes:

1. taking decisions on regulating and spacing childbirth;
2. choosing suitable contraceptive methods;
3. helping childless couples to have children;
4. counselling of both parents and would-be parents;
5. developing the necessary parental, social and family budgeting skills.

Female circumcision

See FGM.

Female condom

A polyurethane pouch that has two flexible rings on either end. One ring is inserted into the vagina and the other ring stays outside the vagina. The ring helps to hold the female condom in place. They can be purchased without a prescription and can be used during anal intercourse as well. Female condoms can be inserted before starting the foreplay, and should not be used at the same time as male condoms. With perfect use, they can be 95% effective in preventing pregnancy and can also prevent some STIs.

Female genital cutting

See FGM.

Female secondary sexual characteristics

Physical attributes (other than the sexual organs) that distinguish females from males, caused by oestrogen during puberty. For example, menstrual periods in females, growth of breasts and pubic hair, broadening of the hip bones and deposition of fat in the buttocks and thighs and under the skin.

Feminine

Acting, or having qualities, which are traditionally considered to be suitable for a woman.

Fertile

The ability to produce a baby. Both men and women can be fertile.

Fertility

The ability to reproduce.

FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)

A traditional practice in which all or part of the female genitals are removed (also called Female Circumcision). This practice has negative health consequences and is considered by many people to be a violation of girls' and women's rights.

Female Genital Manipulation

The pulling of the labia.

Flirting

To behave as if (sexually) attracted to someone, although not seriously.

Foetus

The term used to refer to a baby in the uterus (womb) from the ninth week of pregnancy until birth.

Fondling

To touch gently and in a loving way, or to touch in a sexual way.

Foreplay

All of the sexual activities that people might do to get each other sexually aroused either before or instead of intercourse.

Foreskin

A retractable area of sensitive skin that covers and protects the head (glans) of the penis. Some men have this skin removed soon after birth or in puberty, during a procedure called male circumcision.

Fostering

To take care of a child, usually for a limited time, without being the child's biological parents.

Friend

A person who you know well and who you like a lot, but who is usually not a member of your family. Someone who is not an enemy and who you can trust.

G

Gay

Being sexually and romantically attracted to people of the same gender (also called homosexuality). Typically refers to men who are attracted to other men.

Gender

Refers to widely shared ideas and expectations (social and cultural norms) concerning women and men. These include ideas about how women and men should behave in various situations.

Gender equality

Gender equality means equal treatment of women and men in laws, policies and behaviours, and equal access of women and men to resources and services within families, education, health services, communities and society at large.

Gender roles

The particular economic and social roles that a society considers appropriate for women and men. Men are mainly identified with productive roles that tend to be sequential, while women have more roles: domestic responsibilities, productive work and community activities, which often have to be carried out simultaneously. Gender roles and responsibilities can vary between cultures and can change over time. In almost all societies, women's roles tend to be undervalued.

Genitals

The external sexual body parts. In females, these include the labia majora (outer lips), labia minora (inner lips), clitoris, mons pubis (a soft mound covered with pubic hair) and vestibule (where the urinary and vaginal opening are found). For males, the genitals are the penis, the scrotum and the mons pubis.

Genitals warts

A sexually transmitted infection that is caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) that causes small, painless bumps around and in the genitals, anus and/or mouth.

Genital herpes

Genital herpes (or Herpes genitalis) is a genital infection caused by the herpes simplex virus. It is the most common sexually transmitted infection by the number of current cases.

Most people who carry the virus are unaware of it until they have an 'outbreak', this means you'll get painful blisters on your vagina or penis, thighs or anus. There is no cure for herpes, but there is medication that can shorten outbreaks, although not everywhere available. Best is to prevent infection by using condoms.

Glands

Cells in the skin that perform a certain function. For example, sweat glands produce sweat or perspiration, which help to cool the body.

Glans

The head of the penis.

Gonorrhoea

An STI that causes discharge from the vagina or penis, also referred to as 'the clap' or 'the drip'. Symptoms in men include a discharge from the penis, pain during urination and increased need to urinate. For women, there may be a discharge from the vagina, but many women (and some men too) will not have any symptoms. Gonorrhoea is caused by a bacterium and can be easily treated and cured with antibiotics.

Gynaecologist

A medical doctor specialized in women's reproductive health care.

H

Haemorrhage

Heavy bleeding.

Hepatitis B

An STI caused by a virus that may result in serious liver damage and sometimes even death. Infection occurs through contact with infected blood, semen, vaginal fluids or saliva. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, headache, fever, dark urine and jaundice. It is the only STD for which there is a vaccine to prevent infection.

Heterosexuality

Sexual attraction to members of the opposite sex (men being attracted to women and women being attracted to men).

Herpes

See 'Genital herpes'

HIV

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome). The virus weakens a person's immune system so that the body cannot fight off common infections. HIV is transmitted after exposure to an infected person's blood, semen, vaginal fluids or breast milk.

HIV test

A blood sample is taken from the arm with a sterile disposable needle. Then the blood sample will be examined on the presence of antibodies towards the HIV virus. If this test is done directly after unsafe sex, it has to be repeated three months after the unprotected sexual intercourse, as you can be infected for up to three months without yet having enough antibodies to show up in the blood test. These three months are referred to as the window period.

HIV/AIDS

HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. The term 'HIV/AIDS' is often used because infection with HIV eventually leads to AIDS. A person has AIDS (in contrast to just being infected with HIV) when his/her immune system gets so weak it can no longer fight off common infections and illness and he/she gets ill.

Homophobia

Irrational fear, hatred or prejudice toward people who are homosexual (gay or lesbian).

Homosexuality

Sexual and emotional attraction between people of the same sex. Also known as gay for men and lesbian for women.

Hormonal methods

Another type of contraceptive methods (as opposed to barrier methods) that work by changing a woman's body chemistry. Certain chemical substances in hormonal contraceptive methods mimic the oestrogen and/or progestin hormones that females naturally produce. The contraceptives that include oestrogen prevent the release of an egg from the ovaries, while the methods containing progestin make the uterus an unfriendly environment for sperm and implantation. Hormonal contraceptive methods do not prevent STIs, including HIV.

Hormones

Natural chemicals that are produced by the body and that serve as messengers that tell the body how and when to do things, grow, for example. Hormones also play a role in sexual growth, development and reproduction. Examples include oestrogen and testosterone.

Hugging

To hold someone or something close to your body with your arms, usually to show that you like, love or value them.

HTC centre: HIV Testing and counselling centre

Hygiene

The practice of keeping clean.

Hymen

A delicate piece of tissue inside the vagina. Because the hymen can be stretched or torn during sexual intercourse, the hymen is seen as a sign that a girl is virgin. However, some girls are born with no hymen at all. For others, the hymen can become stretched or torn during sports or for no obvious reason at all. Therefore, not having a hymen is not necessarily a sign that a girl is not a virgin.

I**Identity**

Who a person is, or the qualities of a person or group which make them different from others.

Implantation

When a fertilized egg attaches itself to the lining or wall of the uterus (womb). This is the beginning of a pregnancy.

Implants

A (hormonal) contraceptive method in which six small tubes containing hormones are put under the skin in a woman's upper arm by a specially trained health worker (for example, Norplant). Implants prevent pregnancy for about five years, but can be removed sooner if the woman wants to become pregnant. They do not prevent STIs, including HIV.

Impotence

Inability of a man to get and/or sustain an erection. More than 95% of impotence arises from psychological factors, such as anxiety about sexual performance, guilt, sexual conflicts or emotional relationship problems. But it can also be caused by organic factors, such as spinal chord injury, diabetes, drug use, age or an insufficiency of male hormones.

Incest

Sexual contact between members of the immediate family.

Infertility

Inability to produce a baby or to reproduce, which can be temporary. When permanent, it is called sterility. Both men and women can be infertile.

Intercourse

Vaginal intercourse is the act when the erect penis enters the female vagina and, after reaching a climax of excitement, ejects semen into the vagina. Sexual intercourse can be solely for pleasure or for conception.

Intimacy

Feelings of closeness and trust with another person.

IUD

The IUD (Intra-Uterine Device) or coil is a contraceptive method, mostly used by older women. It is inserted into the uterus by a skilled health worker to prevent pregnancy. It prevents the fertilized female egg from settling in the uterine wall. The most common IUDs are Copper T and Lippes Loop. It does not prevent STIs, including HIV.

J-K-L

Labia

The inner and outer folds of skin that protect the vagina, also called 'lips'. Labia majora: the larger outer lips of the female external genitalia. Labia minora: the smaller, inner lips of the external female genitalia.

Labour

The work that a woman's body does during childbirth to push the baby out of the body.

Lesbian

A woman who is sexually and romantically attracted to other women.

Libido

A term that refers to someone's sex drive, the desire for sexual union and pleasure.

Lining

During the body's preparation for pregnancy, the endometrium in the uterus will grow thicker. This is called the lining: it grows and is shed during the menstrual cycle.

Love

- * to have strong feelings of affection for another adult and be romantically and sexually attracted to them, or to feel great affection for a friend or person in your family;
- * strong feelings of attraction towards, and affection for, another adult, or great affection for a friend or family member;
- * a person that you feel attracted to.

Lubricant

A cream or substance used to make dry surfaces wet and slippery. Lubricants are often used on condoms to protect the condom from tearing. All are water-based and safe to use with condoms.

Lubrication

The natural body fluid that appears in the woman's vagina when she is sexually stimulated and without which a woman would find penetration painful.

Lust

A strong feeling of sexual attraction and desire towards another person.

M

Male circumcision

When the loose fold of sensitive skin (foreskin) at the end of a man's penis is removed at birth or later in puberty. This is often done for hygienic and/or religious reasons.

Male secondary sexual characteristics

Physical attributes (other than the sexual organs) that distinguish males from females, caused by the testosterone hormones during puberty. For example, growth of bones, muscles, genitals, and bodily, pubic and facial hair, lower voice and tougher skin.

Masculine

Socially constructed patterns of how men are expected to behave.

Masturbation

Touching your own genitals and body parts to achieve sexual pleasure. It may or may not result in an orgasm. It is not harmful.

Menarche

The beginning of menstruation; the first menstrual period.

Menstruation (or menstrual period, monthly period)

Periodical cycle in women in which an egg is released from the ovary once a month, and the uterine wall is thickened to prepare for the fertilized egg to settle in it. If fertilization does not occur, then the uterine lining is shed with discharge of blood after 3-6 days. Menstruation starts during adolescence, mostly between the ages of 10-15, and ends between the ages of 45-55.

Menstruation cycle

The monthly process in the female body, which involves the release of an egg, the preparation of the body for pregnancy and the release of the lining of the uterus if no pregnancy occurs. In a 28-day menstrual cycle, the egg leaves the ovary approximately 14 days after the first day of a woman's period.

Miscarriage

Spontaneous discharge through the vagina of a developing foetus before it is able to survive.

Monogamous

The state of being committed emotionally and/or sexually to only one person.

Mutual Masturbation

When partners either touch their own genitals while they are together, or touch each other's genitals at the same time. This may or may not result in an orgasm and is not harmful.

N**Napkins**

A piece of soft, absorbent material worn by a woman between her legs during her period (also known as sanitary towels).

Natural Family Planning

A form of birth control (also known as the rhythm method) in which a woman charts and records on a chart her cervical mucus and daily temperatures with a basal thermometer to determine the time of ovulation. She then does not have intercourse on or around the time of ovulation. The effectiveness of this method depends on how regular a woman's cycle is and her ability to avoid intercourse or use a barrier method (such as condom or diaphragm) when she is ovulating. It is not very effective in preventing pregnancies and does not prevent STIs, including HIV.

Nipples

The tips of the breasts on the male and female chest.

Nocturnal emissions

Also called wet dreams. Ejaculation of semen during sleep.

O

Oestrogen

A hormone produced by the ovaries which helps to regulate the menstrual cycle or conception, and which causes secondary sexual characteristics in females.

Oral sex

Using the mouth and/or tongue to stimulate the genitals of a partner.

Orgasm

A highly pleasurable, climactic response during sex, the peak of sexual pleasure, which is the result of a complex interaction of physical, emotional and hormonal factors. In men, it is usually at the time of ejaculation. 'Multiple orgasms' means having several orgasms within a short period of time.

Ovulation

The release of an egg from one of the ovaries into the fallopian tube. It usually occurs 14 days before the next menstrual period.

Ovum, ova (plural)

A female egg. A cell which, when released from a woman's ovary, may be fertilized by a man's sperm cell.

P

Pap smear

A test in which some cells are taken from the cervix and examined. This test is used to detect early signs of cervical cancer.

Penis

The male sex organ, also used to pass urine as well as semen.

Period

See menstruation.

Periodic abstinence

A contraceptive method by avoiding having sexual intercourse during the days on which a woman is fertile (see also natural family planning). It is not very effective in preventing pregnancies and does not prevent STIs, including HIV.

PEP-treatment HIV

Post-exposure prophylaxis: A medical treatment immediately after exposure to HIV (for instance when having had unprotected sex). This reduces the chance of actual infection and development of the virus.

Petting

If two people are petting, they are kissing and touching each other in a sexual way. Heavy petting: when two people kiss, hold and touch each other in a sexual way but do not have sexual intercourse.

Pill

A hormonal contraceptive method that prevents the monthly release of an egg from the woman's ovaries (ovulation). The pill must be taken every day, except for the 'stop-week', in which a woman does not take the pill and a menstruation will occur. This contraceptive method does not prevent STIs, including HIV. If you have forgotten to take the pill: keep on taking the pill for the rest of the month until you start with the next series of pills. For protection against pregnancy, abstinence or

another contraceptive method (condom) needs to be used, because protection by the pill during the actual period is not certain when you have missed a pill.

Pornography

Verbal or visual material or acts intended for sexual stimulation. Pornography often embodies violence, coercion, discrimination, force or brutality on women, men, children or animals in sexual acts, and represents them in a degrading position. Pornography very often does not present a realistic image of sex, e.g. making the reproductive organs bigger than in reality, or depicting unrealistic 'perfect' body images.

Pre-ejaculation fluid

A small amount of fluid at the tip of a man's penis as it becomes erect (also called pre-cum). This small drop is called pre-ejaculation fluid because it appears before ejaculation. It can contain sperm cells and can cause pregnancy.

Pregnancy test

A test to determine whether or not a woman is pregnant. Pregnancy tests come in two varieties: a urine test and a blood test. The urine test is by far the most widely used and can easily be used by every woman within 10-14 days after unprotected sexual intercourse.

Premature ejaculation

Early ejaculation when a man cannot recognize that he is about to ejaculate and, therefore, is unable to control it.

Prenatal Care

Medical services a woman receives during her pregnancy. The purpose of prenatal care is to monitor the health of the pregnant mother and foetus to ensure proper growth and development for both. Prenatal care can also detect birth defects at an early stage of pregnancy.

Progesterone

The hormone primarily responsible for maintaining a pregnancy.

Protein

One of the many substances found in food such as meat, cheese, fish or eggs that is necessary for the body to grow and be strong.

Promiscuous

Someone who is promiscuous has many sexual partners; the opposite of monogamous.

Prostitution

Providing sexual acts in exchange for payment.

Puberty

Puberty refers to the onset of sexual maturation (girls age 8-10, boys age 10-12). Puberty is the period when the child experiences physical, hormonal and sexual changes and becomes capable of reproduction. It is associated with rapid growth and the appearance of secondary sexual characteristics. Adolescence is the period of transition between puberty and adulthood.

Pubic hair

The hairs that grows in the genital area or on private parts.

Pubic lice

Parasites that live in a person's pubic hair causing intense itching. It can be sexually transmitted. It can be cured with anti-lice medicated shampoo and body wash.

Pulling Out

This is an unreliable method of birth control whereby a guy pulls his penis out of his partner's vagina just before ejaculation (also known as withdrawal or coitus interruptus). It is not recommended, but it is better than not using any method of birth control. This method does not protect against STIs and HIV.

R

Rape

Forced sexual intercourse that takes place against a person's will. Females and males can be raped, but rape victims are mostly female. It must be considered as an act of sexual violence.

Rhythm method

See Natural Family Planning.

S

Safe(r) Sex

Being responsible about sex. Displaying sexual behaviour that reduces your chances of getting or spreading a sexually transmitted infection, getting pregnant or getting a girl pregnant. Usually, this means using a condom during intercourse. It also means that both partners feel safe and that no force is used. Safer instead of safe recognizes that no sexual act is completely safe or risk-free.

Scabies

A skin infection which can be transmitted by physical or sexual contact that is caused by a mite (which is a kind of insect) that burrows under the skin causing intense itching and the formation of pus. Scabies can be cured by using medicated shampoo and body wash.

Scrotum

The thin-walled, soft pouch of tissue containing the testicles. It regulates and maintains proper temperature (a little lower than body temperature) for sperm cell production. Commonly called 'balls', 'nuts' etc.

Self-awareness

An awareness and understanding of your own being, feelings and emotions.

Self-esteem

A person's sense of his or her own worth and value. Feeling good about yourself, respecting yourself and trusting your capabilities.

Semen

A sticky, milky white fluid that leaves a man's penis when he ejaculates, containing reproductive cells called sperms cells.

Seminal vesicles

See Cowper's glands.

Sex

- A person's gender
- Sexual activities with oneself or another person, such as masturbation, petting and vaginal, anal or oral intercourse.

Sexual abuse

Any type of unwanted sexual contact, touching or fondling.

Sexual harassment

Any type of unwanted sexual attention, such as unpleasant sexual comments or physical gestures.

Sexual intercourse

See intercourse.

Sexual orientation

Sexual preference (heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual) for a member of the opposite sex, the same sex, or both, for sexual satisfaction.

Sexuality

Sexuality is a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical and religious and spiritual factors.

Shaft

The long part of the penis below the head (glans) of the penis.

Smegma

A white lubricating substance under the foreskin of the penis. Smegma helps the foreskin to slide back smoothly over the glands at the head of the penis and the clitoris. If the foreskin is too tight, exercise may help to loosen it somewhat. If this does not help, medical help is required. Hygiene is very important: if the genitals are not cleaned regularly, smegma becomes a smelly, white, cheesy substance.

Speculum

A plastic or metal device that is used by a physician or gynaecologist to hold the walls of the vagina open during a pelvic examination or other medical procedure so that the cervix is visible.

Sperm cells

The male's reproductive cells. These are tiny cells, produced in the testicles beginning at puberty and normally continuing well into a man's 70s, which can fertilize a woman's egg, leading to pregnancy. When a male ejaculates, between two to seven million sperm cells leave his body.

Spermicide

Spermicide is a contraceptive method. It is a slippery cream or gel that kills sperm cells. It comes in a variety of forms, including gel, cream, foam, suppositories and film, which can be purchased in most drug or grocery stores without a prescription. Typically, it is used together with another method like a diaphragm or condoms. You can also purchase condoms that are already lubricated with spermicide. Spermicides are not protecting for STI's and HIV.

Staple food

The most commonly eaten food in a country or community, which forms the bulk of the total calorie supply, like nsima, potatoes, rice, maize, millet, banana's and cassava.

STD

See STI.

Sterilization

A permanent contraception method for either males or females. It is done through a surgical procedure, mostly in older people who do not wish to have anymore children. It provides no protection against STIs or HIV.

Sterility

The permanent inability of men and/or women to conceive a child.

STI

Sexually Transmitted Infections. Formerly known as STDs or venereal diseases (VD). Infections that are passed from one person to another through sexual contact and are caused by bacteria, viruses or other parasites. Gonorrhoea, syphilis and HIV are some examples of STIs.

Stigma

A mark of disgrace on your reputation that is often unjustified. For instance people living with HIV often suffer from a stigma they get from their community. Their community may think HIV-positives are dangerous or dirty and therefore call them names, avoid or even exclude them.

Syphilis

An STI that causes small sores in the genital area. Later stages are marked by fever, headaches and pain in the bones and muscles. Syphilis is caused by a bacterium and can be easily cured with antibiotics.

T**Tampons**

Small hard piece of cotton that is put inside the vagina to absorb menstrual blood as it leaves the body, used instead of napkins. A string is attached to the tampon so that it can be easily removed from the vagina. For hygienic and health reasons, tampons have to be changed regularly.

Testicles

Also called testes, or balls, these are the male gonads, located in the scrotum, under the penis. They produce the male sex hormone, testosterone, from birth, and the male sex cells, sperm cells, from puberty onwards.

Testosterone

The male hormone produced in a man's body, regulating man's fertility and causing male secondary sexual characteristics.

Trichomoniasis

A sexually transmitted infection that is caused by an organism that lives in the lining of the vaginal walls and causes an odorous, foamy and irritating discharge. Trichomoniasis, or Trich, can be passed between sexual partners and can be easily cured with antibiotics.

Tubal ligation

A surgical contraceptive method in which a female's fallopian tubes are cut to prevent ova (eggs) from entering the uterus. A woman will continue to menstruate when she has had a tubal ligation. It is a permanent procedure and is also referred to as female sterilization or 'getting tubes tied'. Similar to its male version, vasectomy, it provides no protection against STIs or HIV

Trauma

Severe emotional shock and pain caused by an extremely upsetting experience or a severe injury, usually caused by a violent attack or an accident.

U**Unprotected intercourse**

Sexual intercourse without any protection against pregnancy or STIs, including HIV.

Urethra

The tube that carries urine from the bladder out of the body. In women, its end is between the vaginal opening and the clitoris. In men, the opening, through which semen is also released, is at the tip of the penis.

Uterus

The muscular organ inside a woman's belly in which the foetus develops during pregnancy. Also called the womb.

V**Vagina**

The canal leading from the vulva to the uterus in females. The vagina has great elasticity, allowing a penis to be inserted for reproduction and giving birth to a baby. During sexual excitement, a fluid is secreted by the walls of vagina that act as a lubricant during intercourse. During menstruation, the blood is released through the vagina.

Vaginal fluids

The discharge of fluid that comes out of a woman's vagina. Strangely coloured and bad smelling discharge may indicate an infection.

Values

Beliefs held by one person or a group of people. Values shape people's opinions, attitudes and actions, as well as their ways of thinking and are often influenced by a person's family, religion, culture and life experiences.

Vas deferens

The tube through which sperm cells travel from the testicles to the urethra.

Vasectomy

A minor surgical procedure in which a man's vas deferens are cut and tied, as a permanent contraceptive method. It is a permanent procedure. After a man has had a vasectomy, he will ejaculate semen that does not contain sperm cells. Similar to its female version, tubal ligation, it provides no protection against STIs or HIV.

Virgin

While there is no set definition, it often means a girl or a boy who has never had sexual intercourse.

Virginity

The state of being a virgin: a social concept in which refraining from sexual intercourse till marriage is greatly valued. The concept of virginity is loaded with double standards against women: women are often expected to preserve their virginity till marriage though men can be implicitly encouraged to lose their virginity, mostly without blame or prejudice.

Vitamins

A group of natural substances that are necessary in certain amounts for the body's growth and good health.

Vulva

The external female genitals: the labia majora and minora, the mons pubis and the clitoris.

W

Wet dream

The release of semen (ejaculation) during sleep. Also known as Nocturnal emission, it is common during puberty.

Window period

The time between the moment when HIV enters a person's body and the moment when testing can detect the antibodies to HIV (3 to 6 months). During this window period, a person may test negative, even though he/she is infected with HIV and hence can infect other people.

Withdrawal

A highly unreliable method of birth control that occurs when a guy pulls his penis out of his partner's vagina just before ejaculation, also known as 'pulling out' or 'coitus interruptus'. It is not recommended at all, but it is better than not using any method of birth control. This method does not protect against STIs, including HIV.

Womb

Another term for uterus.

X-Y-Z

Yeast Infection

An infection that is caused by an overgrowth of the naturally occurring yeast in a woman's vagina. Symptoms can include itching, skin irritation, redness, white and lumpy discharge and burning during urination. The infection can be cured by using an anti-fungal medication, which can be bought in a drug store. Wearing cotton, loose-fitting underwear and keeping the area around the vagina dry can help prevent this infection. A yeast infection is not an STI.

HEALTH CENTRES

**To make it Malawian:
FPAM will make this list**