

MOST COMMON STI'S

Which STI's are most common amongst young people in Malawi?

STI	Symptoms	What could happen if you don't go to the doctor
HIV	<p>Most people infected with HIV don't know that they have become infected. They do not feel ill immediately after infection. However, some people may experience symptoms like they have a bad flu, fever, a rash, night sweats, muscle aches, sore throat and fatigue.</p> <p>A person infected with HIV may have no symptoms for a long time. This can be from a few months up to more than 15 years.</p>	<p>When HIV is left untreated it will cause AIDS. Without treatment the HIV-virus starts to destroy your immune system. This means that your body can no longer defend itself properly against bacteria and viruses and you will get ill. Many people still die from AIDS because they found out about their HIV infection too late or did not access treatment (ART).</p> <p>HIV cannot be cured, but there is medication that prevents AIDS (ART). Today there are people living with HIV who have lived a healthy life for more than 30 years thanks to these drugs.</p>
Chlamydia	Discharge from penis, vagina or anus. Sometimes burning sensation when urinating or lower abdominal pain. Often there are no symptoms.	When chlamydia is not treated it can cause an infection in the pelvic area, the ovaries which can cause infertility.
Genital warts (Njelewele za kumaliseche)	Warts in or near the penis, vagina or anus.	Warts can be treated. If untreated they may spread and be transmitted to others. After healing, they may come back again.
Genital herpes	Blisters, sores, spots on around or in the penis, vagina or anus. Burning sensation near the genitals and when urinating.	Herpes cannot be cured, but the blisters can be treated. They can come back again (just like cold sores). That often happens when you're tired or ill.
Gonorrhoea (Chindoko)	Discharge from penis, vagina or anus. Sometimes burning sensation when urinating or lower abdominal pain. But there are not always symptoms.	You could develop inflammations and there is a small chance of becoming infertile.
Hepatitis B (inflammation of the liver)	Tiredness, nausea and abdominal pain. But there are often no symptoms.	Your liver doesn't function properly anymore. Eventually you may even get liver cancer.
Syphilis (Chizonono)	<p>The first symptoms appear within the first three months after infection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a painless sore or ulcer appears in or on the penis, vagina, anus, cervix, mouth or breasts. - body rash, often on the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet - Flue like symptoms, headache, a sore throat, fatigue. 	Syphilis stays in your body if it is not treated. Over time, it can silently damage your nervous system and organs (e.g. heart, brain, spinal cord) which can lead to numbness, blindness, dementia and eventually death.
Canchroid	Painful sores on the genitalia. You may also have swollen glands in the groin area. Fever. May also be called <i>Zilonda za kumaliseche – Nsungu</i> .	Sometimes genital ulcers can go away on their own but in some instances might lead to more serious infections. Visit a doctor once symptoms are suspected.

TIP: always use a condom when practicing sexual intercourse. This is the only way to prevent STI's when having sex.

If you think you might be infected with an STI, you.....

1. Go immediately to the Health Clinic to get tested in order to find out if you have an STI. Tests are trustworthy, simple and usually for free.
2. Make sure you get treatment if you are infected. Treatment cures the bacterial STI's and symptoms of viral STIs. You no longer experience health problems and you can't infect your partner any more.
3. If infected, do NOT have sex until the STI is treated. Tell your partner(s), so they can get tested as well.
4. Keep on using condoms every time you have sexual intercourse (vaginal, anal).