

Health Beat

CSULB Division of Student Services
Student Health Services
Health Resource Center

VIRAL DISEASES CAN LAST A LIFETIME...

BY HEIDI BURKEY

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Viral Diseases Can Last a Lifetime 1,3

Yeast Infections 1,2

To Be Used For Emergency Only 2,4

So, You Want to Get Tested? 3

POINTS OF INTEREST

- **Sexual Health Awareness Workshop starts on January 31. These are held every Monday & Tuesday at 1:00 p.m.**
- **Free HIV testing on: February 3 and 10 March 3 and 10 April 7 and 14 May 5 (Appointment needed)**
- **Free STD testing on February 17 (Walk-in only)**
- **Nutrition Counseling starts on February 28 These are free, individual sessions!**

Two sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) causing confusion and worry among college students are genital herpes (HSV-2) and genital warts/Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). Understandably, both diseases are caused by viruses, which are not curable and are transmitted by direct skin-to-skin contact. What does that mean? Well, a person does not need any visible sores or warts for it to be transmitted to someone else.¹

Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV)

Approximately 45 million people have genital herpes in the U.S. and oral herpes is even more common. It is estimated that about 50 to 80% of our adult population has oral herpes. Herpes Simplex Virus type 1 (HSV-1) generally causes fever blisters in the mouth area and Herpes Simplex Virus type 2 (HSV-2) causes blisters that turn into sores (ulcers) in the genital area (including the anus, vagina, penis, scrotum, and inside the geni-

tals). Oral HSV can be transmitted to the genital area and vice versa during oral sex. The blisters open up and become exposed sores, which heal in 2 to 4 weeks. In the first year of infection, people with HSV-2 have approximately 4 to 5 outbreaks. Flu-like symptoms usually accompany the outbreak of sores. Many times, the first outbreak occurs within 2 weeks after they have been infected.^{1,2}

Testing for herpes is difficult, so it is best to visit a clinician during the first 48 hours of the outbreak. A sample of the sores or a blood test can determine if it is herpes. There are treatments available to lessen the severity and frequency of the outbreaks.

Continued on Page 3



50 to 80% of adults have oral herpes

YEAST INFECTIONS

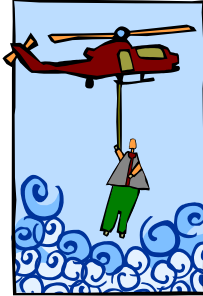
BY KELLY CÁRDENAS

Candida Albicans is a type of fungus that is present in small amounts in our bodies. Some of the places where this organism can be found are in the vagina, rectum, digestive tract, and the mouth.¹ However, when an overgrowth of this organism occurs, it becomes the cause of one of the most common types of genital

infections called, candidiasis, or yeast infection. Usually a yeast infection occurs due to an imbalance of the organism's environment, such as hormonal changes, taking hormones or birth control pills, taking antibiotics, steroids, having an elevated blood sugar, vaginal inter

Continued on Page 2

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1... YEAST INFECTION



There are a variety of ways in which yeast infections can be treated.

course with inadequate lubrication, and douching.¹ Overall, genital yeast infections occur more frequently and severely in people who have a weakened immune system.

Both males and females can develop yeast infections, but women more often experience its symptoms. This type of infection causes symptoms like burning, itching, and discomfort. Some women may or may not experience a “cottage cheese”-like vaginal discharge that smells like bread. Women may also have pain during sexual intercourse and swelling of the skin that surrounds the internal vaginal area. In males, yeast may live under the foreskin, causing an itchy rash, swelling, and redness of the head of the penis. This condition in males is usually called a jock itch that often spreads as a rash from the penis outward to the inner thighs, anal area, and buttocks.²

There are a variety of ways in which yeast infections can be treated. One way is to visit your doctor the first time you experience yeast infection symptoms. The doctor can then prescribe pill medication to take orally. Over-the-counter vaginal creams or suppository medications can also be used and are available in 1, 3, or 7-day treatment. These are very effective. Males with yeast infections may use a topical anti-fungal cream to treat and relieve symptoms. It is usually difficult to treat yeast infections in males, especially if they are uncircumcised and often

infections are recurrent. As a result, circumcision may be the cure for recurrent yeast infections.^{2,3}

Yeast infections may be eliminated or controlled through good genital hygiene. Here are some ways in which yeast infections can be prevented:

- Washing and drying the genital area thoroughly, moisture allows for germ growth.
- Wiping from front to back after using the toilet is also a significant preventative measure in females. This may prevent bacteria that usually live in the rectum from entering the vagina.
- Wearing all cotton undergarments and changing undergarments frequently, especially during the summer, after swimming, or after a physical activity may prevent yeast infections.
- Avoid wearing tight-fitting or synthetic-fiber clothes.⁴

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TO BE USED FOR EMERGENCY ONLY

BY LINDA PEÑA

The CSULB Student Health Services (SHS) offers Emergency Contraception Pills (ECPs) and it is imperative that all female students know when it could be necessary to use them. ECPs are also known as the “morning-after pill.” ECPs are hormonal contraceptives similar to birth control pills, but when used for emergency contraception, they are taken in higher doses. An ECP rapidly prevents or delays an egg’s release (ovulation) from the ovaries. Also, this medication slows the transport of an egg or sperm in the fallopian tubes, and causes the uterine lining to be less hospitable for implantation of a pregnancy.¹ The term “emergency” conveys this treatment is not

to be used regularly as a contraceptive.² Under the definition of emergency, ECPs could be prescribed because of one of the following set of circumstances: 1) If a condom broke or slipped, 2) If a diaphragm or cervical cap came off, tore or was taken out too early, 3) If no contraceptive was used, 4) When someone has been sexually assaulted or raped and are not already using a reliable method of birth control.²

Two FDA-approved drugs are available for emergency contraception: Plan B and Preven. The SHS offers Plan B, a single course of treatment, consisting of two tablets; each tablet contains 0.75 mg levonorgestrel,

Continued on Page 4



Emergency Contraceptives Pills are available at the SHS.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1...LAST A LIFETIME

These prescribed medications are called anti-viral drugs. Some are taken every day and others are taken only during an outbreak. A person can transmit herpes to others even when there are no visible symptoms.^{1,2}

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)

HPV caught people's attention because certain cancers have been associated with it, but most people do not develop cancer from having HPV.³ Currently, it is estimated that 20 million Americans have HPV; 75% of men and women (in reproductive age range) who are sexually active are infected.⁴

It is easier for women to be tested for HPV than for men. The asymptomatic (without symptoms) varieties are usually only detected during a gynecological exam, when the pap test is conducted. Therefore, all women should have annual pap tests if they are sexually active so that if abnormal cells do exist they can be identified and further tests can be done. If HPV is caught in the early stages it may be watched until it clears itself from the body, or treatments may be recommended. The earlier a cancerous condition is detected, the more successful a treatment will be.

There is no test at this time for men, unless they have the visually symptomatic type, genital warts. These appear in the genital area and begin by looking like small bumps. Warts can be in singles or clusters as they grow. Itching and irritation of the area is common, but they are mostly painless. Symptoms may appear between one to eight months after transmission.^{3,5}

Consistent use of condoms is the only way to protect yourself from getting many STDs and HIV. Since some STDs are transmitted by skin-on-skin contact, a condom may not provide complete protection

because there are parts that will be left uncovered during sex. A condom will provide the vagina, anus, mouth, and penis with some form of protection, which is definitely better than nothing at all! Abstinence, reducing the number of sex partners, and being in a mutually monogamous relationship are also suggested as ways to prevent being infected with a STD.

Currently, CSULB is part of a national clinical study for the prevention of herpes using a vaccine. The vaccine has been proven to be safe. Participants must be female, between the ages of 18 and 30, healthy, living in the area for the next 20 months, not pregnant or planning a pregnancy. If interested, please call the Student Health Services Vaccine Office at (562) 985-4874.

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Condom use can prevent many sexually transmitted infections and HIV.

SO, YOU WANT TO GET TESTED?

BY HEIDI BURKEY

The Student Health Services offers free STD testing on certain dates of every month. They will test for gonorrhea, chlamydia, and syphilis. A urine and blood sample are needed to conduct these tests. These three STDs are bacterial infections that can be cured with antibiotics. No appointment is necessary, just

drop in on these dates between 10:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. It will take about 20 minutes and results of the tests will be back in 2 weeks.

Student Health Services also offers free, confidential HIV testing and counseling. An appointment is needed for this test. Call the Health

Resource Center to make one.

If you have symptoms, do not hesitate to come into the Student Health Services to see a clinician who can provide medication or treatment. Call the Health Resource Center or visit our website for test dates and for more information.



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES – HEALTH RESOURCE CENTER
1250 BELLFLOWER BLVD
LONG BEACH, CA 90840-0201
(562) 985-4771 (562) 985-8404 FAX

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2... EMERGENCY ONLY

a progesterone medication. In order to be prescribed this ECP through the SHS, it is necessary for a student to see a physician or nurse practitioner. It is recommended that the first tablet should be taken orally as soon as possible within 72 hours (three days) of unprotected intercourse. The second tablet must be taken 12 hours later.³ Through testing, Plan B has demonstrated an effectiveness of up to 95%.⁴ Students using this method will be cautioned that there could be some nausea and vomiting after ingestion of the pills.

Concerns have been voiced that women will increase unprotected sex behaviors with the ECP availability. Some believe there has been a direct increase in sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Recent studies indicate that this is not the case. According to one study published in 2005, there is no direct correlation between ECP use and STIs.⁵

Advocates for emergency contraception are engaged on a number of fronts to ensure that women have access to ECPs within the brief time frame during which it is most effective. Only recently has it been possible for women to attain ECPs at certain pharmacies that have specially trained pharmacists. Such a pharmacist is required to consult with all women in order to evaluate whether the request for an EC has validity. If the pharmacist finds just cause for the prescription, he/she will then advise the women on its use and possible side effects.

It is recommended that a consistent form of birth control be used on a regular basis, like hormonal contraceptives, diaphragm, condoms, or spermicides and ECPs utilized only when needed.

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ECP should be taken within 72 hours of unprotected intercourse.