



AskDoctor
Dr Karuhanga



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Can I really have an STD without being intimate?

I have not been sexually active for the past 10 years. Recently, I developed burning sores on my penis, and a doctor informed me that I have an incurable sexually transmitted disease (STD). Is it possible to contract such an STD without sexual activity?
Amos

Dear Amos,

Viral infections such as HIV, Herpes Simplex, Human Papillomavirus (HPV), and Hepatitis B can be transmitted sexually and, unfortunately, current medications do not cure these diseases. Therefore, it is important to take preventive measures such as vaccinations when available, to avoid contracting them.

Herpes Simplex is a common viral infection caused by the Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV), which may lead to recurring painful blisters, particularly on the lips or genitals, in both men and women. Historically, Herpes Simplex Type 1 was thought to only infect the mouth area, while Type 2 was considered limited to the genitals. However, due to



practices such as oral sex, both types can now be found in either area.

Once a person is infected with the virus, it remains dormant in the nerves and can later resurface as skin blisters. Triggers for these outbreaks can include stress, weather changes, fever, fatigue, hormonal fluctuations (such as those associated with menstruation), and friction from sexual activity.

The herpes virus can be transmitted through close, direct contact with active

blisters or infected genital fluids, as well as from an infected mother to her baby during childbirth. It is important to note that symptoms of herpes can sometimes occur even in individuals who are celibate and have had previous infections.

Additionally, conditions such as syphilis and aphthous ulcers can be mistaken for herpes infections. Therefore, it is advisable to consult your doctor whenever you experience symptoms for proper diagnosis and management.

Dr Li

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