

repeat all instructions in their own words. If teenagers are using OCPs, they should be encouraged to use a daily activity as a reminder or cue to take the pill. A knowledgeable phone triage person should be available for questions and concerns. Parents or other important adults may be included in all discussions, with the adolescent's permission. An organization that provides education and services for adolescents, including both individual and group counseling, is the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. It has branches in most cities in the United States.

Sexually Transmitted Infections

STIs are infections or infectious disease syndromes transmitted primarily by sexual contact. The term *sexually transmitted infection* includes more than 25 infectious organisms that are transmitted through sexual activity. STIs are among the most common health problem in the United States today with an estimated 19 million people in the United States being infected with STIs every year (Mark, Jordan, Cruz, et al, 2012). Lack of awareness regarding one's susceptibility to STIs when engaged in unprotected sexual activity, be it oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse, is perhaps one of the greatest dangers adolescents face.

Preventing infection (primary prevention) is the most effective way of reducing the adverse consequences of STIs for adolescents. Prompt diagnosis and treatment of current infections (secondary prevention) can prevent personal complications and transmission to others. A critical step in preventing the spread of STIs is including questions about an adolescent's sexual history, sexual risk behaviors, and drug-related risky behaviors as part of every assessment. When the nurse identifies risk factors, there is an opportunity to provide prevention counseling. Prevention messages should include descriptions of specific actions to prevent contracting or transmitting STIs and should be individualized for each adolescent. To be motivated to take preventive actions, the adolescent must believe that acquiring a disease will be serious and that he or she is at risk for infection.

Sexually Transmitted Bacterial Infections

C. trachomatis is the most frequently reported infectious disease in