

# STIs v. VAPING

The *Associated Press* headline on Sept. 19th, 2019 read: **US VAPING ILLNESSES TOP 500, MISSOURI MAN IS 8TH DEATH.**

The *USA Today* headline on June 6, 2019 read: **'A WAKE-UP CALL': 1 MILLION NEW SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS EVERY DAY, WHO REPORTS**

Which of these news stories did you hear about? Chances are your child's school has put out some information about the dangers of vaping but made no mention of how their curricula, policies and culture promote the behaviors which lead directly to sexually transmitted infections.

Don't get me wrong, parents, schools and concerned adults should be talking to kids about vaping. The teen whose lungs became caked with what was compared to "bacon grease as it cooled," is a cautionary tale. We aren't saying it's not important. Two million kids vaping in 2017 is a lot.

But consider these numbers:

- ✓ 1.7 MILLION cases of Chlamydia in 2017 and 45% PERCENT are among 15 to 24 year old females.
- ✓ HPV is responsible for 90% of CERVICAL CANCER, 91% of ANAL CANCER, about 75% of VAGINAL CANCER and 70% of ORAL CANCERS.
- ✓ 80% of sexually active people WILL HAVE AN HPV INFECTION at some point in their lifetime. At any given time, about 40% of 18-59 year olds are infected.
- ✓ It is estimated that the average teen SEES 14,000 SEXUAL MESSAGES EACH YEAR, but most parents (and doctors) admit they **wait for the teen to initiate the conversation**.



Vape flavors and condom flavors designed to appeal to teens.

Many sexually active young people wrongly assume they are not at risk for contracting an STI because...

## They mainly participate in oral sex.

Almost every STI can be transmitted mouth-genital. Think about the stats: HPV accounts for 70% OF ALL ORAL CANCERS, and 40% of young adults are infected at any given time.

## They believe they could tell if their partner was infected.

Approximately 8 out of 10 infected people have NO SYMPTOMS. They don't even know they are infected themselves — *how could someone else "tell"?*

## They "usually" ask when their partners' last STI test was.

What people believe about testing is always startling. What if their last test was 6 months ago but they've had 4 partners since then!? What if they got tested for the Big 8 but none of the lesser know STIs? What if this person is (*gasp!*) LYING about their results?!

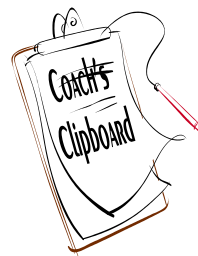
## (STIs v. VAPING... CONT.)

### They only hook up with friends whose sexual history they know.

Maybe its possible to "know" someone's sexual history when at 15, when you go to the same school, and live in the same neighborhood. But it's a huge gamble at 16, 18 or 21 when their circle of friends gets much bigger.

On Earth, here are the FACTS: Almost everyone will eventually have sex. There are a LOT of STIs. Most sexually active people DO get infected. Very few people taking sexual risks get tested as often as they need to. And many people who "educate" teens are actually encouraging risky behavior.

But lets be sure we all talk about the dangers of *vaping*.



## COACH'S CORNER

Since this month's news is about the increase in STIs, it's time for some coaching tips on talking about testing with teens.

YOU (the coaching parent) would say, "When you have a job, the adult thing to do is put some of what you earn into savings. Being sexually active (where a person decides to put themselves and others at risk), means taking on the adult responsibility of getting tested for STIs frequently."

**How often?** At least every 3 months, but also with every new sexual partner, and any time you suspect or discover your partner has had sex with someone else.

**What's involved in the tests?** For males, they will take blood, urine and a sample from inside your penis. For females, they will take blood, urine and scraping from inside your cervix.

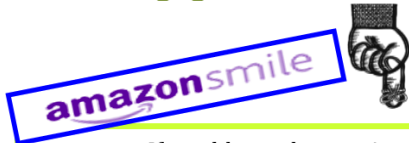
**When would the results come back?** Typically a week to 10 days. Keep in mind, any sexual contact between the test and the results, would invalidate your results.

**What if the results are positive?** Then we manage it. All STDs can be treated, but not all can be cured. For example, you can get rid of Chlamydia, but not the damage it causes internally.

Your wise child might respond, *"That seems really scary Mom. How can I avoid getting infected at all?"*

**And your response will be, "Don't have sex with infected people, and marry an uninfected person who is faithful to only have sex with you."**

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