



Glossary of Terms

abstinence	Refraining from something; not participating in intimate sexual behavior or drug/alcohol use.
adolescence	Transitional period between childhood adulthood during changes may occur mentally, emotionally, physically, and socially.
adoption	– the process of a birth mother giving up her child to a family to love and care for as their own.
AIDS	(Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) – a disease cause by HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) which damages the immune system. The fatal stage is sometimes called “full-blown AIDS.”
birth canal	Another term for the vagina; the exit passage for the baby during delivery.
body fluids	Liquids of the body, including blood, semen, vaginal secretions, urine lymph, feces, sweat, tears and breast milk.
body language	Conscious or unconscious messages or signals given by a person without speaking.
cervix	The narrow, lower end of the uterus that opens into the vagina. Sometimes called the “neck” of the uterus because of its shape.
Chlamydia	Bacterial STI which inflames linings of reproductive organs, often causing sterility if not treated.
cilia	The tiny hair-like projections on the inside of the fallopian tubes.
circumcision	Removal of some of the male’s foreskin on his penis.
commitment	Long-term physical and emotional bond between two people with a strong desire to maintain the relationship.
conception	(Also called fertilization) The uniting of sperm and ovum.
contraception	Use of devices or drugs to prevent pregnancy.
ejaculation	The release of semen from the penis.
epididymis	The place where sperm mature and are stored
erection	The spongy tissue around the penis becomes engorged with blood and becomes upright and stiff.
fallopian tubes	The narrow tubes that are the passageway from the ovaries to the uterus and the place where the male’s sperm can fertilize the female’s ovum.
fertilization	The moment an egg (ovum) and a sperm unite; generally, fertilization takes place in the fallopian tubes (also called conception).
fetus	The term used to refer to the unborn child from the ninth week of pregnancy until birth.
genitals	External sex organs: penis and scrotum in the male, labia and vaginal opening in the female.



genital warts	A viral STI associated with cervical cancer in females and unsightly growths on the genitals of both sexes. Warts can be treated, but not cured.
gonorrhea	Bacterial STD which causes sterility, blindness and arthritis if not treated. Females usually have no symptoms.
helper T-cells	White blood cells which recognize the pathogens and signal the production of antibodies to destroy them. HIV, the virus that causes AIDS kills helper T-cells.
herpes simplex II (genital herpes)	Viral STI which is incurable and causes recurring blister, miscarriages, and still births, and may be related to cervical cancer in females.
HIV (HTLV-III, LSV)	Human immunodeficiency virus, the scientific name for the AIDS virus which attacks T-helper cells of the immune system.
hymen	The thin connective membrane over all or part of the opening of the vagina.
lines	Insincere verbal communication used to persuade another person to do something he or she is reluctant to do.
maturity	Physical, mental, emotional and social development as one gets older.
menarche	First menstruation.
menstruation	The cyclic discharge of the uterine lining when pregnancy does not occur.
monogamy	Having one sexual partner only.
nocturnal emission	An involuntary releasing of semen occurring during sleep; frequently called a “wet dream.”
ovaries	The glands which produce the female’s eggs (ova) and sex hormones.
ovulation	The release of mature ovum from the follicle of an ovary. This process happens approximately one a month from the onset of puberty.
ovum	The egg cell produced in the ovary of a female; it is a single cell about the size of a grain of sand (ova is the plural)
penis	The male sex organ; used for sexual intercourse as well as for the elimination of urine from the body.
pituitary gland	A small pea-sized gland in the base of the brain that starts giving off hormones to begin the changes that occur during puberty.
prenatal care	Medical attention by a doctor before a woman gives birth.
primary sex characteristics	The reproductive system the sex organs.
prostate gland	A gland that secrete a clear fluid which makes up about one third of all the fluid in an ejaculation. The fluid from the prostate provides nourishment to the sperm on their journey through the female reproductive tract
puberty	The stage during which secondary sex characteristics develop and the reproductive system becomes functional.
scrotum	The pouch or sac of skin which contains the testes



secondary sex characteristics	The external signs of maleness or femaleness (e.g., body hair, breasts, muscle development, etc.)
semen	Sperm mixed with fluids. The fluid expelled from the body during ejaculation. It contains millions of sperm along with the fluid used to provide nutrients to the sperm
seminal vesicles	Glands that store the fluid (semen) to carry the sperm out of the male's body
sex	(gender) – State of being male or female; often confused with the term sexual intercourse
sexual intercourse	Process of human making; sexual union of a male and female when the penis is inserted into the vagina
sexuality	The physical, mental, social, emotional, and moral expression of being male or female
signs/symptoms	An observable indication or feeling of an illness or condition.
sperm	The male sex cells which are capable of fertilizing an egg.
STI	(Sexually Transmitted Infection)/ STD (Sexually Transmitted Disease) – contagious diseases communicated mainly by sexual intercourse and other sexual behaviors.
syphilis	Bacterial STI that starts with a chancre sore and, if untreated, can cause mental illness, heart disease, and even death.
testes/ testicles	The glands in which the sperm cells and the male hormone, testosterone, are produced; located in the scrotum.
urethra	The tube that leads outside of the body and which carries both urine and semen.
uterus	The pear-shaped muscular-walled, hollow organ in the female's body where the developing fetus resides.
vagina	Birth canal or female reproductive organ. The tunnel-like structure through which menstrual blood and babies leave the female body; it receive the penis during sexual intercourse.
vaginitis	Bacterial infection (such as yeast) of the vagina. Protistan STIs can also cause itching, burning, and swelling of the vagina and vulva.
vas deferens	The tube through which sperm travel after leaving the epididymis on their way to the urethra.
virgin	Person who has not had sexual intercourse.
womb	Another term for the uterus.