

Sexually Transmitted Infections and Cancer

Short-Term Impacts

When you think about sexually transmitted infections (STIs), you probably think about their impact on your sexual organs like the burning when you pee, the discharge, the possibility of passing it to others through sex, etc. This is all correct, but these are just the short-term impacts of STIs.

Long-Term Impacts

One of the lesser known impacts of STIs is cancer. Cancer from STIs is a risk when the infection is able to exist in a person for a long period of time without treatment, so it is a long-term impact.

How do STIs increase your risk of cancer?

Cancer occurs when something triggers cells in our body to grow and multiply more than normal, often resulting in a mass (tumor) of cells.

When infections live in our body for long periods of time, they can damage the cells in the body. This is usually localized to where the infection prefers to live but can be body wide in some cases (HIV, HHV-8).

The damage that infections do to our cells is what can trigger them to turn cancerous and grow at an abnormal rate.

Types of Cancer Caused By STIs*

C Cervical Cancer

P Prostate Cancer

B Bladder Cancer

M Mouth/Throat Cancer

K Kaposi Sarcoma

A Anal/Colon Cancer

R Rare Cancers

L Liver Cancer

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

C **P** **B** **M** **K** **A** **R** **L**

Hepatitis B and C Virus

C **P** **B** **M** **K** **A** **R** **L**

Human Herpes Virus (HHV-8)

C **P** **B** **M** **K** **A** **R** **L**

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)

C **P** **B** **M** **K** **A** **R** **L**

Chlamydia

C **P** **B** **M** **K** **A** **R** **L**

Gonorrhea

C **P** **B** **M** **K** **A** **R** **L**

This is a list of the most common cancers caused by STIs but is not an exhaustive list*