

# STD/STI INFORMATIONAL FACT SHEET

## **CHANCROID** (Kan-kroid)

### ***What is chancroid?***

Though curable, chancroid is a highly contagious STD. It is caused by bacteria called *Haemophilus Ducreyi* (or *H. Ducreyi*). Chancroid causes ulcers or sores, usually on the genitals. Also, swollen, painful lymph glands in the groin area are often associated with chancroid. Left untreated, chancroid may make the transmission of HIV easier.

### ***How common is chancroid?***

Chancroid is very common in Africa and parts of Asia, and it is becoming more common in the United States.

### ***How is chancroid transmitted?***

Chancroid may be transmitted sexually through skin-to-skin contact with an open sore and non-sexually by means of autoinoculation when contact is made with the pus-like fluid from the ulcer. A person is considered infectious when ulcers or sores are present. Therefore, as long as there are chancroid sores on the body, the person can spread the infection. Good news is that there has been no reported disease in infants born to women with active chancroid at time of delivery.

### ***What are the signs and symptoms of chancroid?***

If infected, symptoms usually occur within 10 days from exposure. They rarely develop earlier than three days or later than 10 days. The ulcer or sore begins as a tender, elevated bump that becomes a pus-filled, open sore with eroded or ragged edges. The ulcers are soft to the touch and can be very painful in men. Painful lymph glands or lymph nodes may occur in the groin on one or both sides of the body. Women may not experience pain and are unaware of the infection.

### ***What are complications of chancroid?***

Chancroid is well established as a cofactor for HIV transmission. An individual infected with chancroid may be more easily infected with HIV. Someone infected with both chancroid and HIV may transmit HIV more easily to a partner who is not infected. Also, persons with HIV may experience slower healing of chancroid, even with treatment, and may need to take medications for longer time periods.

Additional complications from chancroid may include the following:

- In 50% of cases, the lymph node glands in the groin become infected within five to eight days of appearance of initial sores.

- Glands on one side become enlarged, hard, painful, and fuse together to form a bubo, an inflammation and swelling of one or more lymph nodes with overlying red skin. Surgical drainage of the bubo may be necessary to relieve pain.
- Ruptured buboes are susceptible to secondary bacterial infections.
- In uncircumcised males, new scar tissue may result in phimosis (constriction so the foreskin cannot be retracted over the glans or head of the penis). To correct this, circumcision may be required.

### ***How does chancroid affect a pregnant woman and her baby?***

No adverse effects of chancroid on pregnancy outcome are reported.

### ***How is chancroid diagnosed?***

Diagnosis is made by examining the bacteria *Hemophilus Ducreyi* in a culture from a genital ulcer or sore. Because the ulcer or sore is often confused with symptoms of other STDs like syphilis or herpes, it is important that a health care providers rule out these other diseases.

### ***What is the treatment for chancroid?***

If one partner shows symptoms of chancroid, both should be examined and treated with antibiotics regardless of whether symptoms are present. A follow-up examination should be conducted three to seven days after treatment begins. If treatment is successful, ulcers usually improve within three to seven days. The time required for complete healing is related to the size of the ulcer. Large ulcers may require two weeks or longer to heal. In severe cases, scarring may result.

### ***How can chancroid be prevented?***

As with other STDs there are things people can do to reduce or eliminate the risk of infection with chancroid. These include:  
abstinence (not having sex),  
mutual monogamy (having sex with only one uninfected partner),  
avoid touching the infected area to prevent chance of autoinoculation, and  
use latex condoms for vaginal, oral and anal sex to reduce risks. (Although using condoms may protect the penis or vagina from infection, it does not protect body parts such as the scrotum or anal area.)

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For information about specific STDs/STIs, below are sources to use:

**Alan Guttmacher Institute  
(AGI)**

120 Wall Street, 21st Floor  
New York, NY 10005  
Phone: 212/248-1111  
Fax: 212/248-1951  
<http://www.agi-usa.org>

**American Social Health  
Association (ASHA)**

P. O. Box 13827  
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-  
3827  
Phone: 800-783-9877  
<http://www.ashastd.org/>

**Centers for Disease Control and  
Prevention – Sexually Transmitted**

Disease - STD information and  
referrals to STD Clinics  
CDC-INFO  
Phone: 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-  
4636); TTY: 888-232-6348 In English,  
en Espanol  
<http://www.cdc.gov/std/default.htm>

**CDC National Prevention  
Information Network (NPIN)**

P.O. Box 6003  
Rockville, MD 20849-6003  
Phone: 800-458-5231;  
Fax: 888-282-7681  
1-800-243-7012 TTY  
E-mail: [info@cdcnpin.org](mailto:info@cdcnpin.org)

**The Henry J. Kaiser Family  
Foundation**

2400 Sand Hill Road  
Menlo Park, CA 94025  
Phone: 650/854-9400  
Fax: 650/854-4800  
<http://www.kff.org>

**National Herpes Hotline (NHH)**

Open from 9 A.M. to 7 P.M., ET,  
Monday - Friday.  
Phone: 919/361-8488

**National HPV and Cervical  
Cancer Prevention Hotline**

Open from 2 P.M. to 7 P.M., ET,  
Monday - Friday.  
Phone: 919/361-4848

**Planned Parenthood Federation  
of America**

434 West 33rd St.  
New York, NY 10001  
212/541-7800  
FAX: 212/245-1845  
<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/>

**Sexuality Information and  
Education Council of the United  
States (SIECUS)**

130 West 42nd Street, Suite 350  
New York, New York 10036-7802  
Phone: 212/819-9770  
Fax: 212/819-9776  
<http://www.siecus.org>

**Virginia Department of Health**

109 Governor Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
VIRGINIA STD/AIDS HOTLINE  
Phone: 800-533-4148  
<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/DiseasePrevention/factsheets.htm>