Each person deserves access to information and services that affirm and support their sexual and gender identity while also caring for their overall sexual health...

-Mere Abrams
Why is it important to practice safer sex?

Anyone who is sexually active, can contract an STI (sexually transmitted infection). Contracting STIs is quite common and STIs in the U.S. continue to increase. Over 50% of reported STI cases occur between people aged 15-24, according to the CDC. Practicing safer sex can provide comfort and confidence to explore and fulfill sexual desires with less worry.

WAYS STIs CAN BE TRANSMITTED:

- Skin-to-skin genital contact
- Vaginal/front hole sex
- Oral sex
- Anal sex
- Contact with bodily fluids (i.e. blood, semen)
- Needles

Note: The term "front hole" is utilized in addition to vagina throughout this guide to include trans and gender non-conforming people. It's good practice to talk to your partners about what terms they use for their body parts.
Safer Penetrative Sex (Intercourse)

Act of inserting a body part or toy inside someone's vagina/front hole, or anus.

Receptive partner (bottom) is typically at higher risk for contracting STIs than inserting partner (top).

Any anal play needs lots of water-based lube because the anus doesn't produce its own.

External & Internal Condoms

- External (outside) condoms: can roll over a penis or sex toy as a barrier to prevent STIs and/or pregnancy.

- Condoms come in various sizes, shapes, textures and materials (i.e. latex, polyisoprene, polyurethane, ultra sensitive, ribbed).

- Internal (inside) condoms: non-latex barrier that can be used for penetrative sex involving a vagina/front hole or anus to prevent STIs and/or pregnancy.
Safer Oral Sex

**Act of using your mouth to stimulate a partner's genitalia or anus**

**Dental Dams**
Thin, typically latex sheet with flavored lube that can be placed between the mouth & body part oral sex is being performed on to prevent STIs. Water-based lube should be applied to both sides of the barrier to enhance pleasure & prevent breakage. They come in a variety of flavors such as strawberry, vanilla, banana, grape, etc.

**Flavored Condoms**
Thin, typically latex, barrier with flavored lube that is put externally on the penis or sex toy to protect from STIs. Flavored condoms should not be used internally as the sugary substances could cause a yeast infection.
How to Make Your Own Dental Dam Out of a Condom

1. Open and unroll the condom

2. Cut off the tip of the condom

3. Cut down the side of the condom

4. Use that latex rectangle for protection during oral sex
Safer Sex With Toys

Toys such as vibrators (used on the front hole/vagina), dildos (used on the front hole/vagina, & anus), plugs (used anally), and beads (used anally) can help stimulate body parts both internally & externally. There are a growing amount of sex toys made specifically for trans, gender non-conforming, and intersex people's bodies.

Ways to Make Toys Safer:

- Use an external/outside condom on toys being used for penetration in front hole/vagina, anus, or mouth to prevent STIs.
- Try not to share sex toys.
- If you do share a sex toy that's been used by or with a previous partner, clean and sanitize thoroughly (read manufacturer's instructions). Usually mild soap and water will do the trick to clean!
- Use lube - a sex toy will be smoother with lube. Water-based lube is always safe to use with both condoms & sex toys. Silicone-based lube may break down silicone-based sex toys over time.
Latex or nitrile (latex-free) gloves can be used when putting fingers or fists inside a front hole/vagina or anus.

Wearing gloves reduces the chance of contracting or transmitting STIs through tiny cuts on your hands or fingers, and it also prevents you from scratching your partner(s) and exposing them to bacteria under your fingernails.
Safer Sex With Gloves

A glove can be turned into a barrier for oral and penetrative play with people using hormones.

You can make this combo dental dam/condom (a condom!) from a glove by cutting a line up the pinky-finger side, removing the fingers (but be sure not to cut the thumb) of the glove, placing the thumb hole over genitals.
PREVENTATIVE VACCINES / MEDICATIONS

VACCINATIONS

- **HPV Gardasil Vaccine**: Vaccine that prevents against cancers and genital warts caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is an STI that is spread through intimate skin-to-skin contact. The vaccine is most effective if given prior to sexual intercourse, but folks can receive the vaccine through the age of 45.

- **Hepatitis B Vaccine**: Vaccine available to all ages to prevent HBV infection (liver infection caused by the hepatitis B virus). A person who has sex with an infected partner can become infected with the virus.

MEDICATIONS

- **Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)**: Single, daily-dose pill that is prescribed to prevent HIV infection prior to exposure. If taken consistently and as prescribed by your provider, PrEP can reduce your risk of acquiring HIV by over 90%. For more info accessing PrEP in Iowa, visit: prepiowa.org.

- **Long-acting injectable cabotegravir for HIV PrEP**: Reduce risk of HIV by receiving an injection one time each month for first 2 months & then receive an injection one time every 2 months.

- **Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)**: If you have a recent potential exposure to HIV, a doctor can prescribe post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP or nPEP) to reduce your chances of acquiring HIV (must be taken within 72 hours).
BIRTH CONTROL

- Until you have your ovaries/uterus or testes removed you are considered fertile and able to become or get someone pregnant even if you are on HRT (hormone replacement therapy).
- There are many birth control methods to prevent pregnancy.
- Visit bedsider.org to view all methods and find out what works best for you or your partner(s).