

Health Bulletin



How To Talk With Doctors About All Your Health Concerns

(NAPSA)—Talking to your doctor about a sometimes embarrassing condition can be an important step toward protecting your health.

According to the American Social Health Association, as many as one in five Americans has a sexually transmitted disease (STD). That figure might in fact be higher in light of recent news from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that STD screening is “woefully underutilized.”

Doctors suggest that more dialogue with patients about STDs could result in more testing and could help patients better protect themselves from STDs. Yet experts say communication between health-care providers and patients about STDs is uncommon. “Patients need to take responsibility for their sexual health by learning how to prevent STDs and by getting screened by a health-care provider,” said Dr. John F. Toney, M.D. Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of South Florida, “because if you’re sexually active, then you’re potentially at risk.” To initiate a conversation about STDs with your doctor, try these tips:

- Relax. Remember your doctor is a professional and will not judge you because you ask questions or have a condition.
- Ask what types of STDs are common and how to prevent them.
- If you have an STD, learn about different treatments and support groups that are available.

It’s important to talk with your healthcare provider about STDs because some—such as the human papillomavirus (HPV)—might not have any symptoms, but can result in negative health consequences. With approximately 24 million Americans infected, HPV causes one of the most com-



It’s important for patients to talk to their doctors about all of their health concerns.

mon, yet least recognized STDs. HPV can cause genital warts and cervical cancer. Approximately five and a half million new cases of HPV and an estimated one million new cases of genital warts occur each year.

Genital warts usually appear as small bumps or growths, or as a cluster of warts. The affected area may itch, burn or feel tender. Because HPV and genital warts can be transmitted by skin-to-skin contact, condoms can provide some protection, but they are not always effective in guarding against the infection. When you see your health-care provider, ask what you can do to protect your sexual health.

Although there is no cure for HPV, there are options available that can eliminate visible genital warts. Traditional treatments include laser surgery, freezing or chemical removal. However, there are topical treatments, such as Aldara™ (imiquimod) cream 5%, that patients use in the privacy of their own homes.

For more information, call toll free 1-866-799-INFO or visit www.aldara.com.