

The best way to protect oneself from the various communicable (contagious) diseases is to undertake the following basic rules of infection prevention:

- Remember that looking and feeling healthy doesn't guarantee that one may not be a carrier of any serious communicable (contagious) disease.
- In case of a doubt regarding your own or your partner's health condition, do not hesitate to consult a physician and to go through all the necessary tests. This is the only way to be secure about your health condition.
- Consult your physician regarding safe sex rules, and the condom's proper use.



Being the most significant non-governmental actors in the health and social welfare sector, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their International Federation contribute throughout the world in alleviating suffering of the most vulnerable

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TB, HIV, STD:

Prevention

Diagnosis

Treatment



**Croce Rossa
Italiana**

TUBERCULOSIS

Tuberculosis (TB) is a common infectious disease mainly caused by a *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.

It is spread through air when infested people cough, sneeze, or spit.

Tuberculosis usually attacks the lungs but can also affect the central nervous system, the circulatory system, the genitourinary system, the gastrointestinal system; it also hits the bones, the joints, and the skin.

Contrary to most of the dread diseases which can kill in hours like cholera, tuberculosis kills a person over a period of months or years.

Prevention relies on screening programs and vaccination, usually with *Bacillus Calmette-Guérin* (BCG vaccine).

Symptoms Chest pain, and long lasting cough for more than three weeks - possibly coughing up blood. Other symptoms may: include fever, chills, night sweats, appetite loss, weight loss, pallor, and fatigue.

The diagnosis relies on radiology (commonly chest X-rays), a tuberculin skin test, sputum, and blood test.

For Tuberculosis treatment it is highly recommended to consult a physician .

In case someone finds out that he is an TB positive it is highly important that he notifies his partner and relatives

HIV - AIDS

HIV is a virus that attacks the immune system and causes a disease called **AIDS**. AIDS develops several years after the infection.

HIV often has no symptoms. That means that while in fact infected the person may show no signs of illness.

After several years of infection the defence system of the person gets gradually weakened, the person loses weight, gets weaker and becomes highly vulnerable to infections of all kinds.

Diagnosis The only way to know if a person is an HIV positive (that he has been infected by the virus) is by having an HIV test.

Sexual intercourse with an infected person without the proper use of condom can result in an HIV infection.

Sharing of needles or syringes used by an infected person, either for injecting drugs, blood transfusion or for any other purpose involving piercing, can lead to HIV infection.

An HIV positive mother can transmit the virus to her child during pregnancy or at birth. Breast milk can also act as a transmission-medium.

If someone finds out that he is an HIV/AIDS positive it is highly important that he notifies his present and past sex partner(s) that may be infected as well and will have to make the test.

It is highly recommended to consult a physician specialized in treatment of HIV and AIDS carriers.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

Besides HIV, the most spread and dangerous diseases are:

- 1) Syphilis
- 2) Gonorrhoea

Gonorrhoea is caused by the bacterium *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* and is the most common sexually transmitted disease.

Symptoms usually appear within 2-21 days. Thick yellow or white discharge from the penis, vagina, or rectum. Burning or pain at urination (pee) or at bowel movement. Women may also experience pain in the lower abdomen.

If not treated, infection can shift to other organs, lead to more serious infections and to the risk of infertility.

Syphilis: caused by the bacterium *Treponema pallidum*.

The symptoms are numerous and usually appear within 1-12 weeks; painless, reddish-brown sore usually on the mouth, hands, or sex organs. Sore lasts 1-5 weeks then goes away while the syphilis remains.

Three to six months after the sore appeared, a generalized rash appears anywhere on the body along with flu-like feelings. The rash and flu-like feelings go away after 1-2 weeks but the syphilis is still present.

