Choosing to become sexually active is a personal choice that requires thought, planning, and responsibility. Issues regarding the risks associated with sexual activity, as well as how to protect oneself, should be addressed before engaging in any type of sexual encounter including hand, oral, genital, and anal sex.

What are STDs?
Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), also called sexually transmitted infections (STIs), are infections that spread by contact with infected skin or body fluids (e.g., secretions or discharge from the vagina, cervix, penis and anus, blood).

How does someone get an STD?
STDs are typically spread through sexual contact (vaginal, oral, and anal) with an infected partner. However, STDs can also be spread without penetrative intercourse. A number of STDs, especially those like Lice, Scabies, Herpes, Molluscum, and Human Papillomavirus (HPV), can be spread by direct contact (e.g., skin-to-skin if virus gets into open sore/wound). In some cases, symptoms do not have to be present to spread an STD.

How do I prevent myself from getting an STD?
• Abstinence is the only 100% effective way to prevent an STD infection and/or an unplanned pregnancy.
• Having one partner and knowing both your and their STD status.
• Male Latex and Male/Female Polyurethane Condoms may help decrease the risk of STD transmission.
• Condoms must be used consistently and correctly during every sexual act to be effective. Condoms have long been used as a contraceptive method to prevent unplanned pregnancies. In addition, condoms offer some protection against the transmission of STDs when used properly. Sexually active men and women should be aware of how to correctly use a condom.

How to use a male condom:
1. Be careful not to tear the condom when you're unwrapping it. If it's torn, brittle, or stiff, toss it and use another.

2. When the penis is hard, leave a half-inch of extra space at the tip to collect the semen, then pinch the air out of the tip and roll the condom over the penis as far as it will go. If your partner isn't circumcised, pull back his foreskin before rolling on the condom.

3. Smooth out any air bubbles—they can cause condoms to break.

How to remove a male condom:
1. Make sure to pull out before the penis becomes soft.

2. Hold on to the base of the condom while pulling out so that semen doesn't spill out.
How to use a female internal condom:
1. Put some spermicide or lubricant on the outside of the closed end.
2. Get comfy, like you’re going to put in a tampon.
3. Squeeze the sides of the closed-end ring together and insert it like a tampon.
4. Push the ring as far into your vagina as it’ll go, all the way to your cervix.
5. Pull out your finger and let the outer ring hang about an inch outside your vagina. (Yes, it’ll look a little funny.)
6. If you want to use an internal condom for anal sex, follow the same process. But with your anus, of course.

How to remove an internal condom:
1. Squeeze the outer ring and twist it closed like a baggie, so semen doesn’t spill out.
2. Pull the condom out gently.

Important Facts
- Follow instructions on condom package.
- Do not use expired condoms. They may break easier.
- Only use water-based lubricants with latex condoms.
- Use water/oil-based lubricants with Polyurethane condoms.
- Store at room temperature. Damage can occur with exposure to extreme low or high temperatures, moisture, direct sunlight, and fluorescent light.

Think you have an infection?
- Consult a health care provider immediately.
- Refrain from any type of sexual activity until you have been diagnosed and/or treated.
- Get tested at OU Health Services; call 325-2404.

Frequently asked questions:
Do condoms with Nonoxynol 9 (N-9) help to reduce the risk of HIV?
Some condoms include a spermicidal lubricant containing N-9. Recent clinical studies show that N-9 spermicides do not prevent or reduce the risk of getting HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, from an infected partner, or against getting other STDs. Thus, N-9 spermicides should not be used for HIV/STD prevention or protection. Clinical studies also show that use of N-9 spermicides can cause vaginal and rectal irritation which could increase the risk of getting HIV/AIDS from an infected partner. N-9 is still considered safe as a contraceptive for women at low risk for HIV and other STDs.

Can wearing two male condoms provide more protection?
No. During sex, a fair amount of friction will occur between the two condoms and this can increase the likelihood of either, or both, condoms breaking. Extra - strength condoms are available and are even more tear-resistant than normal strength condoms. Extra - strength condoms are especially recommended for anal intercourse.

Do I need to use protection for oral sex?
Many STDs can be transmitted through oral sex. These include Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Herpes, HPV and Syphilis.

Men should wear condoms while receiving oral sex. Women should use a thin square of latex (dental dam) that can be placed over the vulva.
Frequently asked questions continued:

Should I use a lubricant with a condom?
Some condoms are already “pre-lubricated.” If you buy condoms not already lubricated, it’s a good idea to apply some yourself. Even if a condom is pre-lubricated, you may wish to use more lubrication to make penetration more comfortable, and it also makes condoms safer! Lubricants may help prevent condoms from breaking during use and may prevent irritation, which might increase the chance of infection.

If you use a separate lubricant, be sure to use one that’s water-based and made for this purpose. Never use oil or oil-based lubricants — like Vaseline, baby oil, and hand lotion — with latex condoms. They can weaken latex, causing a condom to tear easily. A safe lubricant to use should say “water-based,” “silicone-based” or “safe for use with latex condoms” on the package. Some common, “condom-friendly” lubricants are K-Y Jelly and Astroglide. There are also flavored, water-based lubricants for use during oral sex.

Put a few drops of lubricant inside of the tip of the condom before rolling it down over the penis, and then put more lubricant on the outside of it. This will decrease friction between the condom and the skin of both partners. With the female condom, put lubricant inside and outside of the pouch. (Do not use male and female condoms at the same time.)

Resources and Local Testing Sites
OU Health Services Laboratory
Goddard Health Center
620 Elm Avenue
Norman, OK 73019
(405) 325-2404

Cleveland County Health Department
250 NE 12th Ave
Norman, OK 73071
(405) 321-4048

Centers for Disease Control
www.cdc.gov/std/

Bedsider
www.bedsider.org

References
• www.fda.gov (US Food and Drug Administration)
• www.nlm.nih.gov (Medline Plus)
• www.familydoctor.org