

Dear Leroy

Deciding to have sex with someone means you have responsibilities to each other. You must never put your partner in any danger so it's important to tell your girlfriend and protect her from the risk of a complicated and dangerous illness. Also, if she has an STI and doesn't get treated, she can infect you with it again.

STIs are all different and unfortunately the symptoms of many STIs are not very obvious. When women get STIs they often have no signs for a long time.

So, please make sure both of you are treated. Ask the nurse to give you a 'partner notification slip' for your girlfriend (and if possible for the woman you met at the beerhall too). She takes this slip to the clinic where she'll get the same treatment as you, no questions asked. Do not share your medicine and take the full treatment even after your symptoms start to disappear.

You and your girlfriend need to discuss using condoms every time you have sex. This is the only way to avoid STIs. Stick to one partner and, since you've had unprotected sex, think about going for an HIV test.

As for your relationship – talk openly about what you want from each other. Honesty and trust are vital for a happy relationship. Good luck to both of you.

Auntie Stella

ACTION POINTS

- **ROLEPLAY:** You need a boy and a girl. Leroy decides to tell his girlfriend that he has an STI. What happens? Based on what you now know, if you were in Leroy's situation, would you tell your partner/s you had an STI?
- **PROJECT:** Draw a community map of all the places you know where young people can get condoms. For each place on your map, mark the answers to these questions:

- a** Are the condoms free or do you have to pay?
- b** How old do you have to be to get them?
- c** Do they give them to girls?
- d** Do they give out the female condom?
- e** Are they polite to youth?

Give each place a mark out of 10 depending on your answers to these questions.

If your map shows that young people in your area can't get condoms freely and easily, what can you do to improve the situation? Which organisations and individuals can help you?

- Look at Card Numbers 7 and 13 for more information about STIs.