

C.S. Lewis & Co. Publicists

Dear Editor,

Anyone can catch a sexually transmitted disease (STD), yet many teenagers and young adults believe if they choose the “right” people as their partners, they’ll be safe.

Author **JILL GRIMES, MD**, calls this belief a “seductive delusion.” Her quest is to convince us that no one is immune from STDs, and everyone must take precautions to protect themselves.

In her new book, *Seductive Delusions: How Everyday People Catch STDs* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), Dr. Grimes uses the stories of twenty intelligent, aware, and attractive men and women who contract STDs to show how easy it is to get one of these preventable diseases.

The fictional scenarios, based on patients she has treated in her successful medical practice, show each character receiving the news of their diagnosis with shock and dismay. They wonder, like millions of Americans do, *how could this have happened to me?*

Through informative discussions with their physicians, the patients learn about treatment options, steps to prevent the spread of the disease, how to live with their condition, and the importance of telling sexual partners about their diagnosis, however awkward that is. The book’s compelling personal stories give us a way to remember the details of STD prevention as easily as we remember the details of a television show or short story.

Seductive Delusions introduces us to the pre-med student with herpes simplex virus, the high school quarterback with genital warts, and other everyday people learning how to live with an STD. Each chapter concludes with an informational section with medical facts and answers to frequently asked questions about symptoms, treatment, and prevention.

With more than 18 million Americans diagnosed with STDs every year, anyone who is sexually active is at risk and needs to read *Seductive Delusions*.

As a practicing physician who has worked at the University of Texas Health Services as well as her private practice in Austin, Texas, Dr. Grimes is in daily contact with the country’s most sexually active age group—college students—and has a unique perspective on this little-discussed topic.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Warm Regards,

Cathy Lewis

How Everyday People Catch STDs

New book debunks the myth that only people in “at risk” groups get STDs.

You're generally a careful, considerate person and conscientious about your health. Your new partner seems to share the same qualities. Although you use both oral contraceptives and a condom, one night you discover you've run out of condoms. Couldn't you take a chance, just this once?

All it takes is one instance of unprotected sex to get a sexually transmitted disease (STD). That's the message of *Seductive Delusions: How Everyday People Catch STDs* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), by family practice physician **JILL GRIMES, MD.**

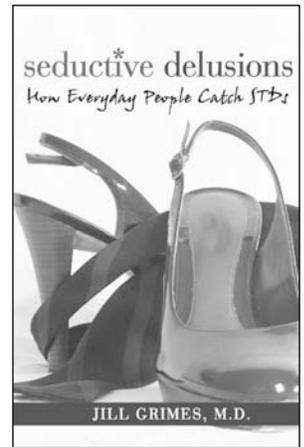
Dr. Grimes tells the stories of ordinary men and women who contracted the ten most common STDs. The characters, based on patients she has seen in her private practice and in her work at University of Texas Health Services, don't fit the stereotypical risk groups of drug users, prostitutes, and the sexually promiscuous.

These cautionary tales emphasize the fact that the decisions you make in your sex life can affect your future fertility, self-worth, comfort, and even choice of a life partner.

Readers learn:

- Which STDs are asymptomatic or hard to diagnose in either women or men
- Why, if you are diagnosed with one STD, you should get tested for others
- Why it's crucial to tell your past and current sexual partners about your diagnosis
- How to make decisions about the best course of treatment
- Why certain STDs are misdiagnosed and why it's important to follow up when symptoms persist

Seductive Delusions is an indispensable resource for high school and college students, parents, singles, and anyone who is sexually active. Readers who are concerned about a particular disease can go directly to the chapter that discusses it, or they can read through the book for comprehensive information on all the STDs.



STD Fast Facts

- More than 18 million Americans are diagnosed with STDs every year.
- Today, one 1 of 4 teenage girls has an STD.
- Almost half of new STD cases diagnosed each year are among people ages 15–24.

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About the Author

JILL GRIMES, MD, is a board-certified family practice physician, a leading expert in sexually transmitted diseases, and the author of *Seductive Delusions: How Everyday People Catch STDs* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

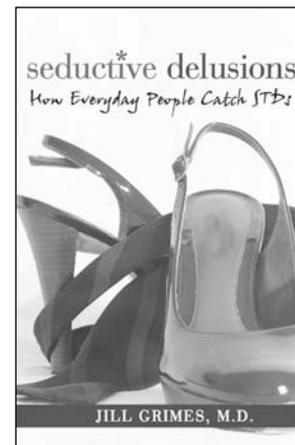
Dr. Grimes is in private practice at West Lake Family Practice and works intermittently at the University of Texas Health Services in Austin, Texas. Dr. Grimes is also a clinical faculty member at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, and recently became an associate editor for the *5-Minute Clinical Consult* textbook.

As a family practice physician, Dr. Grimes has always found it gratifying not only to treat sick patients, but also to encourage the lifestyle changes that can prevent diseases and illness from occurring. However, she and her colleagues began to grow frustrated at their seeming lack of ability to help patients avoid contracting sexually transmitted diseases. Repeatedly, Dr. Grimes saw her patients react with shock and dismay at the news of their STD diagnosis. Patients sincerely wondered how this could have happened to them.

Despite the information doctors and classroom lessons may have provided, Dr. Grimes realized many people remain under the “seductive delusion” that if they choose the “right” people to be intimate with, they won’t get STDs. She decided to try a different approach. She believes stories of people coping with STDs, based on the patients in her practice and the college students she has treated at University of Texas, could be more powerful than the dry facts and statistics in a doctor’s office brochure or medical textbook. These stories became the foundation for *Seductive Delusions*.

Dr. Grimes knows as much about the sexual practices of young people, including high school and college students, as anyone practicing medicine today. She is an articulate and lively speaker who is comfortable discussing taboo health topics without judgment, and clearing up common misconceptions about sexually transmitted diseases in language laypeople can readily understand.

Dr. Grimes is married to Andrew Grimes, MD, and they are proud of their two young daughters. She enjoys being a Girl Scout leader for her daughter’s troop.



We hear about new “hookups” between superstars every week, yet when was the last time we heard of an actor or supermodel catching an STD? The population most primary care physicians treat for STDs is not what you might expect—it’s everyone from cheerleaders, valedictorians, and athletes to professionals of all disciplines, including celebrities. No social class, gender, or race is immune.

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Segment Ideas / Interview Topics

When Good People Get Bad Diseases

Learn why you should never assume your partner is disease-free.

You've finally found someone special—responsible, healthy, and smart. You can't imagine this clean-cut person could have herpes, HIV, or some other STD. Dr. Grimes warns: Don't buy into the myth that good people are immune from unpleasant diseases! Learn:

- The truth about who gets STDs
- Why having a history of few partners doesn't mean your partner is disease-free
- How to have an open and honest dialogue about the consequences of sex before intimacy with a new partner
- How to be understanding and compassionate when you discover someone in your life has an STD

Why Getting Tested for STDs Is So Important

Learn about STDs that have no obvious initial symptoms.

You're feeling fine. Why go through the bother of getting tested for HIV, hepatitis C, and other STDs? Dr. Grimes says even if you feel as though you've never been healthier, your body may be harboring a disease. Find out:

- What are the recommended screenings for common STDs
- How people with HIV can remain asymptomatic for a decade or longer
- Why herpes is usually spread in between visible outbreaks
- Why certain forms of human papilloma virus don't cause visible warts
- Why chlamydia and gonorrhea are contagious until they're treated, even if you're asymptomatic

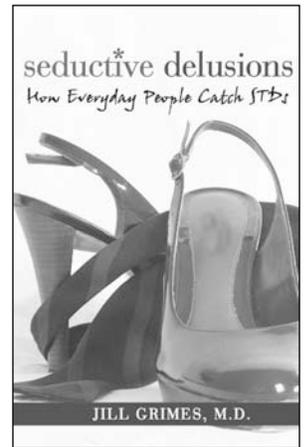
What to Do if You're Diagnosed with an STD

Learn the importance of being responsible to others.

The news isn't good. Your doctor tells you that you have an STD. You've got prescriptions to fill and new facts to learn about how to live with the disease. But you're too devastated to think straight. Dr. Grimes understands the emotions behind an STD diagnosis, and can discuss:

- How shock, outrage, and grief are common reactions
- How others have coped with the news of their diagnosis
- How to get past denial
- Why it's important to be honest with current and past sexual partners—ASAP—about your diagnosis
- How to make choices about treatment options

—MORE—



A Common Myth about STDs

Myth: Oral sex is completely safe.

Fact: Herpes is very commonly transmitted through oral sex, and gonorrhea, chlamydia and syphilis can be as well.

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Little-Known Health Consequences of STDs

Learn how STDs can lead to other health problems.

STDs can be uncomfortable and embarrassing, especially during an outbreak. But according to Dr. Grimes, several STDs can lead to even more significant health problems if left untreated. Find out:

- How untreated chlamydia and gonorrhea can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease, which can cause infertility
- How certain types of human papilloma virus are linked to cervical cancer
- How untreated syphilis can cause deafness, blindness, mental illness, heart disease, and death
- How STDs can affect your fetus if you're pregnant
- How hepatitis C can lead to serious and even fatal liver damage

The Myth of the 100 Percent “Protective” Condom

Find out why condoms don't always keep you safe.

Everyone knows if you're sexually active, the best way to protect yourself from getting an STD is to use condoms. But you also need to know that condoms have a much better track record against some STDs than others. Learn:

- Which diseases condoms offer the best protection against
- Which diseases condoms are not as effective against
- Why it's important to use condoms correctly and consistently
- How to minimize condom failure
- Why you need to use condoms even if you're using other birth control methods

How You Can Catch an STD without Intercourse

Learn which diseases can be transmitted through other forms of contact.

Even if you're not going “all the way,” you can still get an STD, says Dr. Grimes. Learn:

- How herpes and several other STDs can be transmitted from the mouth to the genitals through oral sex
- Why needle sharing is one of the biggest risk factors for HIV and hepatitis C
- How pubic lice can be transmitted through bedding—even when it looks perfectly clean
- What precautions healthcare workers should take to avoid contaminated needles
- Why you should make sure the tattoo parlor you go to uses sterilized needles

2 More Myths about STDs

Myth: You can only get HIV if you're an IV drug user, promiscuous, or have sex with gay or bisexual men.

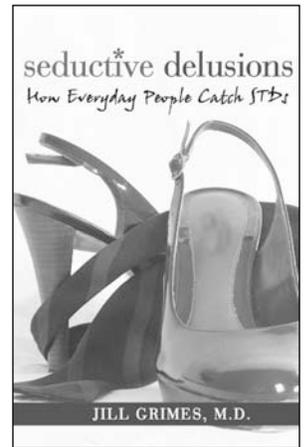
Fact: Having unprotected sex or sharing needles with anyone, even once, puts you at risk for HIV.

Myth: If you have an STD, you'll know it. The symptoms are hard to miss!

Fact: The majority of STDs are asymptomatic in men and several are asymptomatic in women.

Suggested Interview Questions

1. Why did you write *Seductive Delusions*?
2. Why do you think the stories of people learning that they have an STD will help readers take steps to protect themselves from getting one?
3. Millions of new cases of STDs are diagnosed each year, yet many of the young people in the book react with disbelief when they find out they have an STD. Why do they feel like this shouldn't happen to them?
4. How do you console patients who get upset when they learn they have an STD?
5. How do you know whether a potential sexual partner is going to be safe?
6. What can primary care physicians such as yourself do to encourage patients to protect themselves against STDs?
7. Several characters in your book seem as if they've practiced safe sex, but gotten a disease anyway. There's a married mother of three who got hepatitis C at a tattoo parlor when she was a teenager and a hair stylist who didn't even fool around with her date, but got pubic lice from his bed sheets. With examples like that, fully protecting yourself against all the STDs seems practically impossible. Is it?
8. A number of people in *Seductive Delusions* find out about their disease in unexpected ways—after they've been rejected as blood donors or gone through routine health screening as a requirement of a new job. How often should people get tested for STDs?
9. Many of the characters in your book have to face the difficult task of sharing the news of their diagnosis with their sexual partners. What's your advice on how to break the news?
10. We don't get to see into your characters' futures. Do people who are honest with prospective sexual partners about having an STD have trouble forming relationships?
11. Several characters greet the news of their diagnosis with some version of the phrase, "It's not fair!" Why?
12. What are the most commonly misdiagnosed STDs? Why?
13. What are some of the most common myths about STDs that you would like to clear up?
14. What advice do you have for parents of teenagers whose children are starting to become sexually active?
15. Are school health and sex ed classes getting the information out there to our kids well enough?
16. What are some new and notable trends vis-à-vis STDs that you are seeing in your practice?



Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) Facts

- HPV is a group of over 100 viral subtypes, more than 30 of which are transmitted sexually.
- Types 16 and 18 cause 70% of cervical cancers.
- Types 6 and 11 cause 90% of genital warts.

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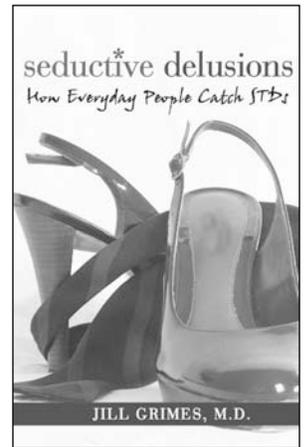
How Safe Is Your Sexual Behavior?

Take this quiz to find out.

Complete each of the following statements by circling the answer that most closely fits. See flipside for scoring.

- 1) You start seeing a new person, and the two of you agree it's time to start a sexual relationship. You:
 - a) both go to your primary care physician to get screened for the most common STDs and wait for the test results before having oral sex or intercourse with a condom.
 - b) have sex with a condom.
 - c) have sex without a condom because she's on the pill and neither of you have symptoms of an STD.
- 2) You've been diagnosed with herpes. You:
 - a) carefully inform your partner about the disease, letting him or her know that you must always use condoms and that condoms don't completely eliminate the risk of transmitting the disease.
 - b) use a condom most of the time and avoid sex during outbreaks, but you sometimes can't bring yourself to tell a new partner because you're worried he or she will get grossed out.
 - c) don't have sex during outbreaks and don't tell your partners. You use condoms when your partner insists.
- 3) You've just learned you have chlamydia and gonorrhea. You:
 - a) calmly tell your current and past sexual partners about your diagnosis and that they need to get tested.
 - b) tell your current partner and procrastinate telling past partners because you're terrified they'll spread rumors about you.
 - c) berate your partner for being such a jerk and end your current relationship. You don't bother telling your ex-lovers. They're not worth your time.
- 4) You had an unusual discharge and some burning when you pee, but now you're feeling better. You:
 - a) go to the doctor anyway.
 - b) wait to see if it returns. You'll call the doctor then.
 - c) can't stand doctors. There's no way you're going unless you can't stand the discomfort.
- 5) Someone you've hooked up with on a vacation cruise asks you to have oral sex as a way to have fun without having to use condoms. You:
 - a) decline, knowing that some diseases are transmitted orally and you don't want to risk that with someone you don't know very well.
 - b) accept after confirming that s/he doesn't have herpes or other STDs that can be transmitted through oral sex.
 - c) go for it. You don't want to look a gift horse in the mouth.

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Your sexual health today has implications that range far into the future. Decisions made early in your life can impact future fertility, self-worth, and even choice of a life partner. No one sets out thinking they're going to catch any disease, but you can't go back and make a different decision once you've contracted a viral STD or developed scarring in your reproductive organs.

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SCORING

- If most of your answers were “a,” you are being very safe and responsible about protecting yourself against STDs.
- If most of your answers were “b,” you aren’t doing everything you could to protect yourself against STDs. Remember, all it takes is one instance of unprotected sex to transmit a STD.
- If most of your answers were “c,” you’re living on the edge. Not only are you unsafe, you’re also being selfish.

Herpes Statistics

- Estimates vary, but between 50 and 90% of adults have oral herpes by age 50.
- 1 out of 4 adults has genital herpes.
- 90% of people with genital herpes are unaware of it.