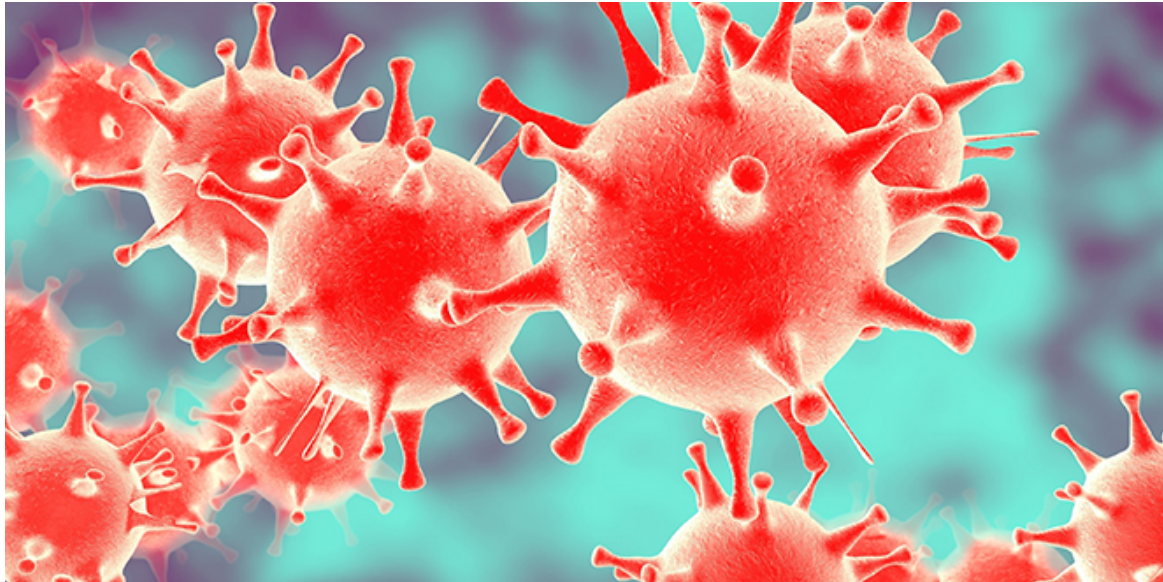


HEX Condom Joins Global Fight Against STI and Zika Spread Offering Free Condoms for All



Stockholm/San Jose – April 21st, 2016: April was declared as STD awareness month by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and it could not be more relevant in 2016. We started this year with the knowledge that chlamydia, [gonorrhea and syphilis infections are on the rise in the USA](#), then came the discoveries surrounding the spread and implications of Zika virus in South America, now only this week the UK reported evidence of antibiotic-resistant 'super-gonorrhea'.

Now is the time to talk and LELO, the world leader in sexual pleasure, has compiled a 101 lowdown on the "then, now and future of sexual health" as well as offering **free HEX™ samples**, [a new re-engineered condom available on lelocondoms.com](#), in a bid to stop the increasing threat of STIs.

What's in a Name?

STD? STI? What are they, which is worse, and what's the difference?

According to the [World Health Organization's \(WHO\) 1999 guidelines](#), the preferred term is *sexually transmitted infection* (STI).

Note to Editors: All media inquiries can be directed to pr@lelo.com

LELO is the world's leading designer brand for intimate lifestyle products. On launching in 2003, LELO transformed the look, feel and function of how personal massagers were perceived, and now applies the same commitment to quality and innovation through bedroom accessories and soy massage candles. LELO AB is the Swedish company behind LELO, where offices extend from Stockholm to San Jose, from Sydney to Shanghai.

"The word *disease* implies that a person has a set of distinctive, identifiable symptoms, and most of the time, sexually transmitted infections do not present any symptoms," says [Carolyn Deal, Ph.D.](#), chief of the sexually transmitted diseases branch of the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

The confusion in terminology lies in the fact that all STDs are STIs, but not all STIs are STDs. Semantics aside, the most effective way to stop the spread of STIs and protect you and your partners is to practice safe sex: [wear a condom](#).

Background: STIs in History

Since the existence of mankind, we have been having sex, so STIs and STDs are nothing new. There's speculation that the "*sexually immoral person [sinning] against his own body*," in the Bible is a reference to STIs.

Centuries later, William Shakespeare's Thersites wished "*Neapolitan-bone-ache*" - Elizabethan slang for syphilis - on the entire Greek army, backing up the theory that the disease's rapid spread from the 15th century was driven by European colonization and trade routes.

Like today, it wasn't just syphilis that the sexually active had to contend with; in 16th century Paris, prostitutes around the Le Clapiers district were blamed for spreading gonorrhea, earning the STI its colloquial nickname still used today - '[the clap](#).'

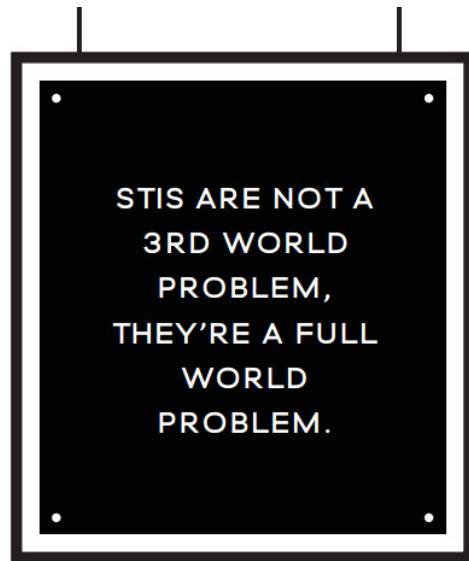
Throughout the 20th century, both the US Army and Navy waged war against STIs, either through promoting condom usage ("*Put it on before you put it in*," urged 1942 training film, *USS VD: Ship of Shame*), or [warning soldiers against "procurable women" and "good time girls."](#)

Fast forward to the 1960s, and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) was reported. But it wasn't until the first clinical observation of late stage symptoms, acquired [immunodeficiency syndrome \(AIDS\) in 1981](#) that propelled sexual health on to the public radar.

STIs in Numbers

498 million people aged 15 to 49 are infected each year with chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, or trichomoniasis and every day more than 1 million new people are added to the list.

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OVER ONE MILLION PEOPLE
GLOBALLY ARE INFECTED
WITH AN STD EVERY DAY

19 Million Americans are
infected with **STDs** annually



BUT ONLY HALF ARE AWARE OF IT

70 years of zero innovation in condoms,
and this is the result. Every major country
faces a similar problem.

LELO HEX™

While [Human papillomavirus \(HPV\) is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States](#), Chlamydia is most commonly reported with nearly 3 million new cases each year.

Among all age groups, teens and young adults have the highest rates of infection but older generations are still having their fun and are at risk too with 40-85 years olds seeing a 17% increase in infections in the past 3 years according. According to Matty Silver, President of ASSERT NSW – The Australian Society of Sex Educators, Researchers: “Education campaigns about safe sex are generally aimed at young people. The safe-sex message seems to have missed the baby-boomer generation.”

STIs Today - And Tomorrow?

Bacteria, viruses and parasites that cause STIs evolve and adapt for survival and in today's society we are faced with 'Super Bugs'. Currently causing concern in the UK is '[super-gonorrhea](#)'. Long successfully treated with a combination of ceftriaxone and azithromycin, a current strain is proving resistant to the latter antibiotic. The second most common STI globally, left untreated gonorrhea can cause infertility, pelvic inflammatory disease and even blindness in infants born to infected mothers.

In Central and South America, as well as areas of the Caribbean and beyond, a more complex threat still is gathering pace. Primarily spread via

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mosquitos, Zika virus is not classified as an STI. Nonetheless, we now know that the virus can be transmitted sexually by men - with potentially devastating consequences. Just this month, a CDC review confirmed what had long been suspected: [Zika virus is a cause of microcephaly and other severe fetal brain defects](#). With that in mind, [WHO's latest guidelines regarding the sexual transmission of the virus](#) is clear: "All people who have been infected with Zika virus and their sexual partners—particularly pregnant women—should... have access to condoms and use them correctly and consistently."

2016: The Summer of Safe Sex

When it comes to Zika, it's not just individuals living in affected regions who are at risk. As the Rio 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil draw ever closer, spreading the safe sex message is becoming more urgent - not least among the 10,500 athletes set to compete. A combination of endorphins, testosterone and sports-honed bodies resulted in a whopping 150,000 condoms begin used in the Olympic Village at the London 2012 Games; with winter's Sochi 2014 proving similarly sizzling.

Spread the Word - Not STIs!

Follow this month's hottest topics with the hashtag #STDMonth16, and take action:

- 1) **Talk:** New partner? Discussing sexual histories matters. What are their thoughts on condom usage? When did they last get screened? Finally, if the prospect of honest exchange leaves you blushing, should you really be getting intimate with this person?
- 2) **Test:** Because the majority of STIs present no tell-tale symptoms, the only way to know for sure is to get tested. Talk to your local health provider, and relax: depending on what you're being tested for, you'll either have a quick blood test, swab of genital areas, or be asked to provide a urine sample. Easy!
- 3) **Treat:** Bacterial STIs - chlamydia and syphilis, for example - can be quickly treated with a course of antibiotics prescribed by your doctor. The symptoms of viral STDs such as HIV can be managed with medications. Book an appointment and ask!

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Steve Thomson, LELO CMO says: *"STD Awareness Month was created to make us think more carefully about our Sexual health. We know the condom is 100% the most effective way of controlling the spread of STDs. But the fact is, many people give up on the condom far too quickly, with usage rates declining worldwide. Availability of condoms is not the major issue. Appeal is. We've re-engineered the condom because people deserve a better alternative and we're offering LELO HEX™ for free this April with every sign up on lelocondoms.com."*

Condoms are *the* single best way to prevent the spread of STIs and protect your and your partners' reproductive health. To find out more about how HEX™ is reimagining a future free from STIs and to receive a sample of the world's most innovative condom to date, visit www.lelocondoms.com.

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