



Stand strong against the stigma of STIs

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It can be very traumatic to be diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection. You might feel ashamed or angry. These are normal responses, but it's important to remember that this doesn't have to change your life significantly. Here are some tips for coping with an STI diagnosis.

If you haven't seen a doctor to be diagnosed, you should do so immediately. Many STIs are curable, but you won't know if treatment is an option for you unless you consult a medical professional.

Even for infections that can't be cured, like herpes or HPV, measures can be taken to prevent transmission and reduce pain.

Testing can be done on campus at the Student Wellness Centre, or at a number of sexual health clinics run by Hamilton Public Health.

The schedule and location of these clinics can be found at Hamilton.ca (go to Public Health and Social Services, then to Sexual Health and, finally, to Sexual Health Clinics).

You should be aware that some STIs, namely HIV, syphilis and gonorrhea, must be reported by your doctor to the Hamilton Public Health department.

You will also be required by law to provide the names of your previous sexual partners so that they can be anonymously notified if you choose not to notify them yourself.

If you've been diagnosed, it's easy to want to blame yourself or someone else. But blame isn't a productive response.

Some STIs can be dormant before they show symptoms, so it can be difficult to know what sexual encounter resulted in transmission.

Getting an STI from your partner isn't necessarily a sign that they have been unfaithful; one of you could have been infected by a previous partner.

Having an STI does not define who you are, and is generally not an intentional fault.

They are very common, and they don't mean that you've been sexually promiscu-

ous (not that there's anything wrong with that either).

It might feel like it sometimes, but having an STI does not mean that your love life is over. Many people find happy relationships after being diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection.

But it is important to share this information about your health with any potential sex partners.

Some infections, like herpes and HPV, can be spread by skin-to-skin contact, even when you're wearing a condom.

It might be helpful to have a rehearsed script when talking to potential partners in case you get nervous.

It is better to tell partners before a sexual encounter so they can make informed decisions about their own health. This gives people an opportunity to share their sexual history in return.

Many STIs are so common that your partner probably won't be surprised or uncomfortable. And sex is much better when you're both honest with each other.

You might find it helpful to do some research about the STI you have. When you first see the doctor, they might not have a lot of time to explain your infection to you.

In addition, many doctors aren't experienced with sexual health and may not be familiar with new advances in treatment protocols or the odds of transmission.

Doing some background research will help you to understand what your doctor is saying and be able to ask the right questions.

Being an active participant in your health-care can prevent you from feeling helpless with respect to your sexual health.

Some helpful resources about STIs can be found online at cdc.gov/std or in the Student Health Education Centre (SHEC) on campus.

If you're feeling overwhelmed by your diagnosis, or having trouble processing feelings of guilt, resentment or hopelessness, you should consider seeing a counsellor at the Student Wellness Centre to talk about your feelings; keeping everything bottled up will only cause problems in the long run.

In the Kitchen

Chow down on gooey chocolate chip cookies



Taste: It's *the* chocolate chip cookie, need I say more?

Cost: Under \$15

Convenience: Basic ingredients, 10 minutes preparation time



SILHOUETTE FILE PHOTO

Warning: cookies may be subject to theft, most likely by a blue furry creature.

Natalie Timperio
Senior InsideOut Editor

Double chocolate, fudge layered, candy coated, cream cheesed iced, sprinkles-on-top. While these frills may apply to many desserts, this recipe is anything but. No fancy ingredients, no complicated directions. It's an old time favourite, a timeless classic, a 'brings me back to my childhood days' kind of treat.

They're crispy without too much of a crunch and have just the right amount of sweetness without making your stomach ache afterwards. They're not costly nor will they eat up much of your time to bake – though you'll probably be eating them most of the time.

This dish is none other than the chocolate chip cookie. And it's something that most of us all know and love. I find its best enjoyed when secretly stolen from your mother's bear-shaped cookie jar (at least, that's how I remember the cookie jar).

The homemade chocolate chip cookie is not to be underestimated. Chips Ahoy! or PC's Decadent Chocolate Chip Cookies just can't compete, so don't even try telling friends and family that you've baked those wannabes from scratch.

People recognize a homemade chocolate chip cookie when they eat one, so flouring your apron, buttering your nose or "accidentally" burning your hand in the oven won't fool them.

I don't promise this to be the healthiest of dessert choices, but I promise it to be one that can help to put a smile on your pissed-off partner's face, make your friends (momentarily) forget that you stabbed them in the back, or perhaps dissuade your professor from giving you a failing grade. (Disclaimer: bribery is strictly prohibited at McMaster University and can result in serious consequences – but if you're really in the shitter, then what do you have to lose?)

These chocolate chip cookies can be consumed with anything, be it milk (plain

or chocolate), tea, coffee and, to hell with it, even alcohol (Bailey's is best).

Seal a few in a Ziploc bag and bring them to class; peers will gaze at you with envy or possibly even murderous hatred (because yes, these chocolate chip cookies are really that good), putting meaning back into the phrase "to die for."

If you don't buy it then I dare you try it. This chocolate chip cookie recipe will have you shouting to the high heavens in sincerest thanks for bestowing you with such awesome ingredients to make thy chocolate chip cookie.

Yes, it may cause fits of delirium and inexplicable happiness, but of course, no less is to be expected from this chocolate chip cookie recipe. So tie on that apron, pull out the oven mitts and get on that baker's hat, if you have one. It's time to do some baking.

Ingredients
1 cup All-purpose Flour
1/2 tsp Baking Soda
1/2 tsp Salt
1/4 cup Sugar
1/2 cup Brown Sugar (firmly packed)
1/2 cup Shortening
1 tsp Vanilla
1 Egg
1 cup Chocolate chips
1/2 cup Nuts (optional)

Directions
1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Sift the all-purpose flour, baking soda and salt onto wax paper.
3. Mix the sugar, brown sugar, shortening and vanilla well in a bowl.
4. Beat in the egg.
5. Mix in dry ingredients.
6. Stir in the chocolate chips (and the nuts, if using).
7. Drop the mixture by tsp onto a greased baking sheet.
8. Bake 8-10 minutes.

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