

# V.D. The gift that-

By Terri Moon

**H**ello, Alice? This is Bruce. Listen, I don't know how to say this, but I saw my doctor today...I've, uh, probably got some kind of venereal disease. You're the only girl I've been with...my doctor wants you to see him. You might have it, too."

Because Bruce sought immediate medical attention as soon as he noticed an abnormality, his chances of a rapid and complete recovery are excellent. So are Alice's, since suspecting she was infected as well, he notified her.

Today, gonorrhea and syphilis are only two of the venereal diseases (VD) that "typically" affect the U.S. population. In fact, however, there are some 20 types of VD, or as they're more commonly referred to today, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs).

Just what are the "sexual diseases"? While gonorrhea alone victimizes some 1.6 to 2 million people in the U.S. every year, a similar number contract urethritis (inflammation of the urethra) or cervicitis (inflammation of the

cervix) caused by growing lists of bacteria or viruses.

Trichomoniasis is contracted by yet another 1.5 million victims in the U.S. and those who get syphilis total 80 - 85,000 every year. Several million other Americans get genital herpes (HSV) infections. Herpes is considered "incurable" and frequently recurs in those who contract it. Every year, 200,000 to 500,000 new cases of Herpes are recorded.

Complications from these diseases vary as much as the types of STDs that are contractable. They range from local discomfort to infertility, ectopic pregnancy complications, like stillbirths and neonatal deaths (newborn deaths).

According to sources in the Preventive Medicine Activity at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C. gonorrhea still tops the list as the most frequently reported STD seen there. Herpes is the second most common STD and is followed by syphilis.

## Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea is caused by a bacteria that needs a dark, moist, warm and carbon-dioxide rich place to live. Contrary to rumors, gonorrhea is impossible to "catch" from a toilet seat or doorknob.

Men usually begin to see evidence of gonorrhea two to seven days after having sex with an infected partner. They will probably experience a greenish-yellow discharge and a burning when urinating. In about 20 percent of the cases, however, gonorrhea has no symptoms. Complications for the male include

