

## — keeps on giving —



epididymitis, arthritis and sterility.

As for women, gonorrhea may be without symptoms in up to 80 percent of the cases. Symptoms that do occur, in the other 20 percent, include vaginal discharge, menstrual irregularity, painful urination and lower abdominal pain. The pain can indicate more serious complications like inflamed Fallopian tubes, pelvic inflammatory disease, arthritis and sterility.

### Syphilis

Primary syphilis is a cup shaped painless sore and appears pimple-like (chancre). It usually disappears in one to two weeks whether treated or not.

Secondary syphilis symptoms can arise six weeks to six months after initial infection and can last for eight weeks. This stage can disappear with or without treatment, but don't be fooled. A person can have several relapses with secondary syphilis.

The third stage of syphilis is the "latent" stage. This is also a highly contagious period. Late syphilis can affect any organ and produce serious clinical illnesses including blindness, insanity, heart problems, paralysis—and eventually, death.

### Herpes

Herpes is painful. The male may find blisters on the shaft of his penis and can have burning urination. A female may experience a vaginal discharge, external blisters and a swelling in the genital area, often accompanied by painful urination.

Herpes Simplex Type I symptoms may show up as fever blisters around the mouth; however, this is not necessarily

an STD. Type II symptoms show up in the genital areas when the disease is transmitted by sex.

The Herpes symptoms will most likely disappear in one to two weeks, but as the virus becomes "inactive", symptoms can recur.

What to do? First, abstain from sexual intercourse and consult a physician. Remember that while Herpes is not considered contagious when in the inactive stage, medical authorities still know very little about the "carrier" stage. When active, Herpes is highly contagious. The symptoms may disappear, but don't think the disease will vanish. In fact, you could have Herpes and not show any symptoms at all.

### Spreading disease

The spread of sexual diseases can best be reduced by better efforts to identify and treat all those with known symptoms, as well as their sexual partners.

With any form of STD, it is imperative to consult a physician once the symptoms are noticed. No "suspected" cases should be ignored. Also, the sexual partners of those who have STD symptoms should seek medical attention immediately. The symptoms may not be there, but if an STD is present, it will make itself evident sooner or later. (Terri Moon is a writer for the Stripe, Public Affairs Office, Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C.).