

“Sex Hygiene and Venereal Disease”

Foreword by Ben C. Major:

This booklet, a small format (approximately 10 cm x 16 ½ cm) pocket version, is one of many Army produced pamphlets issued to every soldier upon enlistment, designed to raise awareness about the importance of sexual hygiene and self-control. The booklet was published throughout the war, and although its contents did not change, it can be found in a number of different layouts and typesets. The example shown in this document was published in August of 1940

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For clarity and ease of reading, the booklet has been digitally enhanced and enlarged for the reader's pleasure. In addition, it has been produced in such a way that it can be read like the original item, and so cannot be printed and stapled together in its current form.

Many thanks,
The WW2 US Medical Research Centre Staff

SUMMARY

1. Manhood comes from healthy sex organs.
2. It is not necessary to have sexual intercourse in order to keep strong and well.
3. Disease may ruin the sex organs and deprive a man of his health and happiness.
4. You have a fine healthy body now. Keep it that way.
5. Venereal diseases come from sex relations or intimate contact with a diseased person. They are very serious. Gonorrhea and syphilis are two of the worst.
6. Most prostitutes have venereal disease.
7. Guard against venereal disease by staying away from "easy" women. Don't gamble your health away.
8. If you do not have self-control then do not fail to take safety measures.
9. If you get diseased, report at once to your commanding officer. Time is most important.
10. Will power and self-control help to keep a man's body and mind healthy.
11. A healthy body and a healthy mind lead to happiness.

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SEX HYGIENE AND VENEREAL DISEASE

WAR DEPARTMENT



WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, August 1, 1940.

This pamphlet, prepared under the direction of the Surgeon General of the Army, is published for the information of the military service in general.

A copy will be furnished to each recruit upon enlistment.

[A. G. 726.1 (10-20-39).]

By order of the Secretary of War:

G. C. MARSHALL,
Chief of Staff.

Official:

E. S. ADAMS,
*Major General,
The Adjutant General.*

Welcome Soldier . . .

YOU have joined the Army. It is an honorable profession and the Army expects you to uphold that honor.

You have been examined and found physically fit. You start your career in the Army with a clean, healthy body that will serve you long and well if you treat it right. You have a good mind and good intelligence. Beware that you are not robbed of these treasures.

The Army does everything possible to help you but there are some things that depend upon you, yourself, if you are to preserve your health.

Read this straightforward discussion of sex hygiene and venereal diseases. It will tell you some important facts and real dangers you should know about.

FACTS ABOUT SEX

Manhood.—Sex is what makes a man a strong two-fisted fellow. No little undeveloped boy can grow to splendid manhood without the sex organs. They make a boy grow up with a vigorous body, and they give him grit and strength.

A man's most important sex organs are the penis and the testicles. The testicles are the two glands which hang in a sack (the scrotum) below the penis. They make two kinds of secretions or juices. One of these secretions contains the male cells which makes it possible for a man to become a father. The other substance is poured into the blood and goes all over the body—to the muscles, the brain, the heart, and the other organs. It is this substance that gives a man strength and bravery. It makes the voice deep, the shoulders broad, and the body active and vigorous. It causes the beard to grow and it gives power to the muscles, the heart, the brain, and other internal organs. It develops a man's personality and gives him the manhood that women admire so much.

You should take care of your sex organs and see that neither disease nor injury destroys them. In order to keep the penis clean and prevent inflammation, you should pull back the foreskin and wash underneath it when taking a bath. If the condition of the organ prevents keeping it clean, you may need a circumcision and should ask the Army doctor about it.

"Wet dreams."—When the sex glands become active and fill up with male cells they may overflow at night. Usually at the same time the man dreams. This discharge is called a seminal emission or "wet

dream." It is a perfectly normal happening. It may come several times a month or only once in two or three months. Quack doctors often use this normal experience to prey on the minds of young men and frighten them into taking fake cures. No one should worry about these discharges, and no treatment is necessary.

Varicocele.—A varicocele is a swelling of the veins, usually on the left side, in the sack that holds the testicles. It feels like a bag of worms. Young men sometimes worry about this, but it is quite harmless and nothing to be alarmed about. If this condition interferes with athletics, a supporter may be worn. Supporters can be obtained at the station hospital.

A foolish idea.—Many ignorant people think and say that a man needs to use his sex organs to keep sex power, and that it is necessary to have sex relations in order to stay healthy. No idea could be more false. Even the people of long ago knew this. Their great wrestlers and fighters avoided sexual intercourse in order to save their strength and vigor. Today our best boxers and athletes do the same thing. Famous explorers have proved many times that a man can keep perfectly healthy, strong, and active without sexual contact. The sex organs are not muscles, but are glands and do not need exercise. No amount of exercise or use will make them grow larger or stronger. The truth is that using the sex glands too much exhausts them and weakens a man. And, too, there is always the danger of getting a disease. Venereal disease may very seriously injure the sex organs, destroy a man's vigor, and ruin his manhood.

VENEREAL DISEASES

Soldier take care!—You have been told some important facts about sex. Now what about the danger ahead? The danger threatens from venereal diseases. Venereal diseases are caused by germs that are passed from person to person by very close contact, usually through the sex organs. Therefore, the vast majority of cases come from sex relations with an infected individual. The commonest venereal diseases are syphilis and gonorrhoea. Both of these diseases are very catching. The soldier who goes with a diseased woman is very apt to become infected with one or more of these dangerous diseases. He may not only wreck his health for months or years but may even lose his life. The Army can protect you against many of the other diseases, but it cannot save you from venereal disease without your help. In other words, it is up to each soldier to do his part. He must know what venereal diseases are, and how they are spread. If he does foolishly risk his health, he should know what to do to reduce the chances of catching these dangerous diseases.

In the first place, all soldiers should clearly understand that every woman who is loose is likely to be diseased whether she takes money for her services or not. You can be certain that the great majority of women who do business for money are infected with one or more of these diseases and are highly dangerous to you. You can never be sure how safe any girl is who can be easily persuaded to have sex relations. Someone may have already infected her with one of these serious conditions. Doctors know this only too well. They see what has happened to the man who

takes a chance. It is a sad bargain to trade your cash and your fun in exchange for a venereal disease that may ruin your life. The soldier who is wise enough to realize that "easy" women are not safe has taken the first step toward saving himself from this danger.

Syphilis.—Syphilis is one of the worst of all diseases. The big life insurance companies know what terrible damage it does. Their records show that syphilis shortens life, and that the death rate for those who have syphilis is double the rate for those who do not have the disease.

Syphilis is a slowly acting (chronic) disease caused by very tiny germs, shaped like corkscrews, which are carried with their poisons through the whole body and into every organ by the blood. There they increase rapidly in numbers. The germ can easily get into the blood through the tender lining of the penis. Diseased women (and men) have millions of these germs swarming in the body though they may look perfectly healthy for a while. Sex contact with such women is extremely dangerous. Even the mouth may have millions of these invisible germs, and kissing such a woman may let the infection into your system. The germ cannot live long outside the body, so that there is little danger of catching the disease from dishes, toilets, and the like. This is so well known that the Army has ruled that all cases of syphilis will be considered not in line of duty but due to a man's own misconduct (wrongdoing) unless he can prove the opposite. *This means that he loses pay for the time lost while getting treatment, as you can learn by reading AR 35-1440, and that if he be-*

comes crippled as a result of the disease he gets no pension.

The disease begins about 3 weeks after exposure (sex relations) as a sore (chancre—pronounced “shanker”), usually on the penis, that may not cause pain, and that may be so small as to escape notice. This sore may take weeks to heal. During this time the person does not feel sick. This is the best time for treatment if the disease is to be cured. Be sure to report to the doctor at the station hospital any small pimple or sore or “hair cut” that comes on your penis.

If not stopped by treatment, the syphilis germs and their poison spread to all parts of the body. The disease develops into the *second stage* in 6 weeks to 3 months. The signs of this stage may show in any part of the body. Some of the common signs are: fever and body pains, headache, sores in the mouth and throat, rapid loss of hair, skin rashes, and swelling of the lymph glands, especially in the groin. This stage may be light or it may be very severe.

Steady treatment is absolutely necessary at this time. Otherwise it may be too late.

During these first two stages the disease is *very catching*. Early and regular treatment does much to kill the germs and makes the infected person not so dangerous to other people.

The *last stages* of syphilis develop very slowly. The germs bore deep into the body and all its organs. Great damage may be done to the brain, the nerves, the heart, the arteries, the liver, and the bones which the germs attack. Syphilis in its late forms causes skin ulcers, swelling of the bones and joints, leakage of the heart, insanity, bleeding into the brain, and paralysis.

Can syphilis be cured?—The answer is “yes,” if treatment is started very early (when the sore of the first stage appears). Treatment begun in later stages must be continued for a longer time, and the percentage of cures is less. The early signs disappear very rapidly with treatment. Too often a person thinks on this account that he is cured and stops treatment. But the disease is still in his body and is able to do serious damage. A test of the blood easily proves this. Active syphilis in dangerous form is almost sure to show itself later. Treatment must be steady and continue over a long period of time. The patient must be under a doctor's care *from 1 to 3 years to reach a cure*.

Gonorrhea.—Gonorrhea is another one of the venereal diseases. It is hardly ever caught except by sex relations with loose women. Practically all prostitutes have gonorrhea. The germs causing it get into the opening of the penis and attack the delicate lining. From there they spread into the deeper parts and may even be carried by the blood to the joints and the valves of the heart.

The first sign of the disease is usually a burning pain in the penis when making water. This happens any time from 2 days to 4 days after sex relations with a woman who has gonorrhea. At first the urine shows a few fine white flakes in it. Within a day or two more, a thick yellowish matter comes from the opening of the penis. This matter is pus. *It contains millions of gonorrhea germs and is very dangerous*. If a drop of this gets into the eyes it causes very severe inflammation and pain. Many times the eye is quickly destroyed and the person is blinded for life.

If treatment is started at once, the disease may be kept from spreading and doing deeper damage. But, if treatment is not taken, gonorrhoea may become incurable and do great harm. Many men lose sex power on this account, and others become sterile (cannot become fathers).

Gonorrhoea is a serious disease. It may cause great swelling and pain of the testicles. The channels in these important sex glands where the male sex seeds are made and stored may be sealed forever. Very painful inflammation of the joints is common. Joints are often left stiff and useless. Disease of the heart, kidney, and bladder are also serious effects. One of the worst results is stricture. This is caused by a scar in the tube of the penis through which urine passes. The scar often draws together making it hard to pass the water. Finally the scar may close the canal completely, making it impossible for the man to pass urine at all. Then a serious operation is necessary.

Can gonorrhoea be cured?—If proper treatment is started early the disease can usually be kept from spreading. It may even be possible to bring about cure in 10 days to a month. Strong drugs are used. A doctor must keep close watch on the case; therefore soldiers are always put in the station hospital. But, if nothing is done, the germs may attack the deeper parts where treatment cannot reach them easily. The disease may last for years or may continue for a lifetime. A person with chronic (long lasting) gonorrhoea is dangerous to others. When such a man marries he usually ruins his wife's health by giving her the disease.

Gonorrhoea can best be prevented by not having loose sex relations.

Other venereal diseases.—Syphilis and gonorrhoea are the most common and most dangerous of the venereal diseases. But there are several others that are spread by sex relations.

One of these is chancroid. In this condition, dirty ulcers appear on the penis. These ulcers grow rapidly. They may in severe cases almost destroy the penis. Luckily, in this disease, the germs do not get into the blood. But they do attack the glands in the groin and make them swell. These are then called buboes or "blue balls." An operation is necessary in order to drain the matter (pus) that gathers in these swellings.

It is not necessary to describe the diseases that are not so common. But it is important to remember that they all come from filthy and diseased women. The way to avoid them is to stay away from all loose women.

KEEP YOUR HEALTH

A priceless treasure.—Your well-made body and your fine health are treasures more precious to you than great riches. It is important to clearly recognize this truth so that you do not lose these priceless possessions by foolishness or ignorance. Through the years, vigor and manhood have developed in you, so naturally it is hard to realize that they can be quickly and forever ruined. Make sure that one dreadful mistake does not cost you all the wealth of your manhood.

Prophylaxis.—Because venereal diseases, particularly syphilis (the worst one), act slowly, most healthy people do not see the terrible damage they often cause to the body. There are always some men who find it hard to believe and pay attention to the warnings about

venereal diseases, and others foolishly take chances not realizing how serious are the risks they run. For that reason paragraph 3c, AR 40-235, requires that every soldier who exposes himself to infection shall use individual materials at the time to prevent venereal disease. For the purpose, post exchanges sell tested and approved prophylactic kits. The Army also provides a special treatment (prophylaxis) to be used after intercourse for the prevention of venereal disease.

Men should clearly understand that examinations have proved practically 100 percent of prostitutes are infected with gonorrhea and most of them have syphilis as well. Also, soldiers should remember that it is never safe to guess a loose woman is free from disease. Many a man has learned this truth to his bitter cost. Naturally, no infected woman would admit to a man she is diseased. Why should she? Therefore, men who run the risk of disease by having loose sex relations should never fail to take all safety measures. *It may save them from infection followed by a long course of treatment or possibly a lifetime of terrible disease.*

Prophylactic packets.—Post exchanges, as has already been mentioned, are required to stock for sale tested and approved materials for the prevention of venereal diseases. These are to be used by individuals at the time they expose themselves to infection. Experts generally agree that a rubber protector is the safest preventive. The quality is very important because many rubbers of poor grade have holes and others break. Therefore, strict standards and test have been adopted to insure that only high quality preventives are handled by post exchanges.

Final word.—It is well to know that after exposure prompt and careful washing of the parts with soap and water may prevent syphilis, but not gonorrhea. To increase safety against this and other venereal diseases, the Army prophylactic treatment should also be taken. For best results, this should be done within 1 hour after exposure and must be taken thoroughly and strictly according to directions.

Many drug preparations sold for prevention of venereal diseases are practically worthless. It is a waste of money to buy these and *dangerous* to depend on them.

IF YOU GET DISEASED

The Army makes every effort to keep its soldiers well, but it cannot keep you from getting venereal disease unless you do your part. You have been told what the diseases are and how they are caught. And you have been told how to guard against getting them. It is now strictly "up to you."

In spite of every warning, some men catch one or more of these serious diseases. They are very unlucky fellows, but through their own fault.

If you are so unfortunate as to contract a venereal disease do not despair and do not let embarrassment or the fear of losing your pay prevent you from reporting the fact at once. Remember that it is extremely dangerous to your health to try to hide a venereal disease and thus prevent proper treatment. Remember that the earlier treatment is started the better are your chances of cure.

Report to your commanding officer the minute any suspicious signs appear or if you have any reason to

believe that you may possibly have contracted a venereal disease. Army Regulations require that you do this and you become liable to trial by court martial if you do not. (See par. 5, AR 40-235.)

Your commanding officer will have you report to a medical officer for examination. If you have a venereal disease the medical officer will start the proper treatment at once.

Steady treatment is important. *Great harm is done by missing treatments.*

Sticking to it is important. *The man who stays with the treatment to the end has the best chance for cure.*

One more word of warning. Do not waste your time, money, and health on quack doctors; they peddle false cures. You spend your money for nothing. Worst of all, you lose precious time when you should be getting proper treatment. And do not go to a drug-store clerk for advice and medicines. He is not trained to treat disease and may not even know what is wrong with you.

CONTROL

The "know-it-all" person claims that a man must have sex relations to keep well and develop strength in his organs. Scientific study proves how untrue this idea is. You now know that much of the substances made by the sex glands are taken into the blood, particularly in young men. These secretions do a great deal to develop his muscles and his manhood.

Stop to think. You must either control your sex wishes or give in to them. There are only two ways, if you give in, either by self-abuse or by going with

easy women. Self-abuse hurts your self-respect, and loose sex relations may rob you of your health.

The safest way to guard your health is to keep yourself under control.

To have control you must develop a strong *will power*. Every person in the world finds that life is a big struggle. A struggle against the difficult things in the world. And a mighty struggle against the desires inside himself. It takes strong control to get along in life.

Will power and control are developed by keeping a healthy body and mind. This means that a person must live a normal, active life. He must eat and sleep the right way, work hard, play hard, and have good friends. A hobby to which he devotes his interest and enthusiasm in his spare time is a fine thing.

In developing control it is especially important to keep away from liquors. Alcohol breaks down a man's will power. It makes him reckless and foolish. He does not think clearly and he does not act intelligently. How well do prostitutes know this! They know that liquor weakens a man's good sense and makes him an easy mark.

A strong healthy body throws off disease. It is something of which to be proud. A healthy mind is just as important as a sound body.