What are some Safe Practices?

- **Get vaccinated for protection against diseases and infections**
  The vaccines available in Singapore include the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and Hepatitis B vaccines. The University Health Centre (UHC) provides both vaccines (more information below).

- **Go for regular screening**
  Many Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) / Diseases (STDs) can go undetected due to the lack of symptoms. Regular screening is the best method for early detection and treatment to prevent future complications. Consult your doctor on the type of screening you should opt for.

- **Observe good personal hygiene**
  This includes washing up before and after any sexual activity and refraining from sharing of towels or undergarments, as well as objects such as razors, needles, or sexual toys.

- **Abstaining from sex or casual sex**
  Practising abstinence from sex or monogamy are some ways to alleviate the chances of contracting an STI / STD.

- **Use contraceptives such as condoms**
  Condoms are often used primarily as a form of contraception. Individuals who practise other forms of contraception may omit the use of condoms, which in turn places them at higher risks of an STI infection. It is important to note that condoms play a key role in the prevention of an STI / STD transmission.

**Overview: STI-related Vaccinations**

**Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination**

The HPV vaccination offers protection against specific types of HPV infection that may lead to cervical cancer. The benefits of HPV vaccination are maximised when given before one starts any sexual activity.

The HPV vaccines approved for use in Singapore include Cervarix and Gardasil 9.

Cervarix provides protection against HPV types 16 and 18, which account for 70% of all cervical cancers, and have been shown to be both clinically- and cost-effective in the local setting for females. Gardasil 9 provides protection against an additional 20% of cancer-causing HPV types. It is clinically effective for both males and females.

The HPV vaccination is suitable for individuals between the age of nine to 45 years old, with the vaccination recommended for females aged nine to 26 years old under the National Childhood Immunisation Schedule in Singapore.

UHC offers the Gardasil 9 vaccination, which is administered in the form of an injection over three doses in the following intervals (1st dose, 2 months after the 1st dose, and 6 months after the 1st dose).

Always consult a doctor if you are unsure about your vaccination eligibility.
Are vaccines completely effective for HPV prevention?

- No. As with any vaccination, HPV vaccinations do not guarantee 100% protection.
- HPV vaccinations are not substitutes for routine cervical cancer screening. Women who have received vaccination are still encouraged to continue going for Pap tests once every three years (if you are between 25 to 29 years old) or HPV tests once every five years (if you are 30 years and above).
- Cervical cancer can be caused by other HPV subtypes which the vaccines do not protect against. In other words, the HPV vaccines do not protect against all cancer-causing HPV subtypes.
- As such, regular screening is still your best protection against cervical cancer.

Hepatitis B Vaccination

The Hepatitis B vaccination protects against the Hepatitis B virus, which infects the liver.

The Hepatitis B vaccine is effective only for people who have not been infected with the Hepatitis B virus. Individuals who do not have antibodies from a previous Hepatitis B infection and who are not Hepatitis B carriers can receive the vaccination.

UHC offers the Hepatitis B vaccination, which is administered in the form of an injection over three doses in the following intervals (1st dose, 1 month after the 1st dose, and 6 months after the 1st dose).

Always consult a doctor if you are unsure about your vaccination eligibility.