CLIENT TEACHING  Testicular Self-Examination

- Choose one day of each month (e.g., the first or last day of each month) to examine yourself.
- Examine yourself when you are taking a warm shower or bath.
- Support the testicle underneath with one hand. Place the fingers of the other hand under the testicle and the thumb on top (this may be easier to do if the leg on that side is raised).
- Roll each testicle between the thumb and fingers of your hand, feeling for lumps, thickening, or a hardening in consistency (Figure 40-2). The testes should feel smooth.
- Palpate the epididymis, a cordlike structure on the top and back of the testicle. The epididymis feels soft and not as smooth as a testicle.
- Locate the spermatic cord, or vas deferens, which extends upward from the scrotum toward the base of the penis. It should feel firm and smooth.
- Using a mirror, inspect your testicles for swelling, any enlargement, or lumps in the skin of the testicle.

- Report any lumps or other changes to your health care provider promptly.

Figure 40-2  ■  Rolling the testicle between the thumb and fingers.

Specific techniques of self-examination, see the Client Teaching feature.

CLINICAL ALERT

It may be wise for both male and female nurses to request permission from a parent or guardian before teaching testicular self-examination to teenage boys. Although the nurse need not touch the boy during the teaching, the boy must touch himself during TSE and parents may prefer the nurse not instruct him to do so.

RESPONSIBLE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR. Responsible sexual behavior involves the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, the prevention of unwanted pregnancy, and the avoidance of sexual harassment or abuse.

STI Prevention. The prevention of STIs is an essential part of sexual health teaching (Figure 40-3). Increases in these diseases are due to two factors: (a) changing sexual morality that has permitted increased sexual activity and (b) an increase in the number of sexual partners. Because the term sexually transmitted disease elicits feelings of guilt, shame, and fear, people frequently do not seek medical help as early as they should. Clients need education about these diseases, preventive measures, and early treatment. Many STIs can be treated quickly and effectively. Others may have serious consequences. For example, women may develop pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) resulting in damage to the reproductive structures and possible infertility. AIDS has no cure. The anxiety about AIDS transmission has caused many individuals to alter their sexual behavior, such as using a condom during intercourse.

The Clinical Manifestations feature, earlier in this chapter, lists common signs of STIs for which people should seek medical care. Methods for decreasing exposure to STIs are described in the Client Teaching feature.

CLIENT TEACHING Preventing Transmission of STIs and HIV

- Limit the number of sexual partners.
- Use condoms in nonmonogamous and homosexual relationships or other relationships that have the potential for STI transmission.
- Follow safe sex practices during oral sex including the use of a latex dental dam during cunnilingus to prevent STI transmission.
- Talk openly with sexual partners about how to have “safer sex” and be honest about any history of an STI.
- Abstain from high-risk sexual activity with a partner known to have or suspected of having an STI.
- Report to a health care facility for examination whenever in doubt about possible exposure or when signs of an STI are evident.
- When an STI is diagnosed, notify all partners and encourage them to seek treatment.
- Avoid transfusions of banked blood or blood products. Use autologous transfusions (donation of own blood before surgery) for elective surgery whenever possible.