

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) – What you need to know before testing

INFECTION (STBBIs)	HOW DO I GET IT?	SIGNS & SYMPTOMS	TEST	TREATMENT AND PREVENTION	COMPLICATIONS
Chlamydia & Gonorrhea <i>Bacteria</i> found in the vagina/cervix, penis, rectum/anal area, throat or eye. joint	Unprotected oral, anal, vaginal sex with a person who has it.	Often no symptoms. Discharge (rectum, penis or vagina). Pain/burning when peeing. Pain during sex. Bleeding during/after sex or between menstrual periods. Itching penis and testicular pain or swelling. Throat and eye infection.	Urine and/or swab (urethra, cervix, vagina, rectum or throat)	Curable. Antibiotics are available for free from the sexual health clinic or by prescription from your health care provider. You can get it again from an infected person. Partner(s) need treatment.	Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), Infertility, Ectopic pregnancy or miscarriage, Chlamydia: Inflammation of the testicles, prostate or scrotum, Reiter's Syndrome (joint pain/inflammation), Lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV) sores and flu-like symptoms. Gonorrhea: Testicle infection, Arthritis or severe infection in the blood.
Syphilis <i>Bacteria</i> that is most often sexually transmitted.	Unprotected oral, anal, vaginal sex with a person who has it. Direct contact with sores or rashes.	Often symptoms are missed. Different symptoms are seen at various stages of infection. Initial symptoms include painless sore and rash. Flu-like symptoms and swollen lymph nodes. Long term damage affects the heart, brain, bones and other organs.	Blood test and/or swab of painless sore	Curable. Antibiotics are available for free from the sexual health clinic or by prescription from your health care provider. You can get it again from an infected person. Partner(s) need treatment.	Permanent damage to the brain, heart, bones, and blood vessels. Mental disorders or neurological problems. It can be passed to baby during pregnancy and birth, which can result in birth defects or death.
HIV <i>Virus</i> that attacks your immune system leaving it unable to fight some infections.	Contact with infected person's body fluids (blood, vaginal fluids, semen or breast milk). Unprotected sex. From shared drug equipment.	Flu-like symptoms 2 to 4 weeks after exposure. Enlarged lymph nodes.	Blood test Anonymous and rapid testing available	No cure. There are medications (antivirals) available to manage the infection. Pre exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post exposure prophylaxis (PEP)	Progression to AIDS. Severe infections due weakened immune system, cancers (cervical, skin). Dementia, chronic intestinal disturbances, and death.
Human Papillomavirus (HPV) <i>Virus</i> that can infect the genital and throat area.	Skin to skin contact with someone who has HPV. Unprotected oral, anal or vaginal sex with a person who has it.	May cause small bumps that look like cauliflower in the genital area called genital warts or no visible symptoms. Itchiness, discomfort during sex. Bleeding with sex or shaving.	Visual diagnosis by a health care provider and/or cervical screening test	No cure. May spontaneously resolve within 2 years. Prescription creams, freezing, burning or surgery to remove warts. New infections or multiple strain infections can occur, even after treatment. Vaccine available. Cervical screening starting at age 25.	Certain strains can lead to cervical, penile, oral or anal cancers. Genital warts can come back after treatment.

Hepatitis B <i>Virus that can cause a serious infection of the liver.</i>	Unprotected oral, anal or vaginal sex with a person who has it. Exposure to infected blood, shared needles. During childbirth from infected mother.	Often no symptoms. Flu-like symptoms, tiredness, nausea and vomiting, decreased appetite. Pain in abdomen, jaundice (yellow skin and eyes), rash and joint pain.	Blood test	No cure. Some people recover naturally within 6 months of infection. Treatment will include a referral to a specialist. Vaccine available.	Chronic Hepatitis B can lead to cirrhosis (scarring of the liver), liver cancer and liver failure. Complications can lead to premature death.
Hepatitis C <i>One of six viruses that can cause a serious infection of the liver.</i>	Unprotected oral, anal or vaginal sex with a person who has it. Exposure to infected blood, shared drug equipment. Infected mother to baby during pregnancy/delivery.	Often no symptoms. Flu-like symptoms, fatigue, not hungry, nausea and rash. Dark urine and pale-coloured stools. Jaundice (yellow skin and eyes). Chronic infection: abdominal pain, swelling of the abdomen, blood in stool and vomit, jaundice.	Blood test	Curable. Treatment with antiviral medication. Most people will be cured with treatment.	People can be re-infected. It can lead to chronic disease and liver cancer.
Herpes <i>One of two viruses that can cause genital herpes and cold sores.</i>	Skin to skin contact with someone who has herpes even with no symptoms. Unprotected oral, anal or vaginal sex with a person who has it.	Painful sores to mouth and/or genital area. Pain while peeing. Flu-like symptoms and swollen lymph nodes for primary infection. Recurrent infection slightly less severe.	Visual diagnosis by a health care provider, sore swab, and/or blood test	No cure. Prescribed medication (antivirals) can lessen the pain, length and severity of the outbreak. Avoid direct contact if you feel tingling or burning or if you have sores.	Can have recurrent outbreaks that are unpredictable. Can be passed from mother to baby during pregnancy and birth. Herpes infection of the eye can cause scarring of the cornea and blindness.
Trichomonas <i>Parasite found in urethra, bladder, vagina, cervix or under foreskin of the penis.</i>	Unprotected oral, anal or vaginal sex with a person who has it. Genital touching.	Often no symptoms. Penis and vaginal discharge (bad odor and frothy). Pain or burning while peeing. Pain during sex.	Urine, swab (urethra, vagina or cervix)	Curable with antibiotics. Partner(s) need treatment.	PID, infertility, premature birth.



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Four ways to protect your health in the future:

1. Use condoms and/or barriers for oral, vaginal and anal sex
 2. Get tested regularly and when changing partners
 3. Have your partner(s) tested
 4. Get vaccinated
- A pregnant woman with a STI is at risk of passing it to her baby
 - Untreated infections may result in long-term health complications
 - For more information about STIs, ask your health care provider