



Sexually Transmissible Infections: The STI Facts

What is a sexually transmissible infection (STI)?

Sexually transmissible infections (STIs) can be passed from person to person during sexual activity with someone who already has an STI.

Sexual activity includes:

- penis in vagina (vaginal sex)
- penis in bottom/anus (anal sex)
- licking, sucking, kissing partner's genitals (oral sex)
- sharing sex toys

Using protection such as condom, dam and PrEP (for HIV only) is a great and effective way to protect you from STIs. Condoms and dams reduce the amount of skin-to-skin contact and stops the transfer of bodily fluids. Dams are only used for oral sex.

STIs are caused by a bacteria, virus or parasite.

- Bacterial STIs include chlamydia, gonorrhoea and syphilis. These can be cured with antibiotics (a tablet or injection).
- Viral STIs include genital herpes, genital warts, HIV and Hepatitis B. These can all be treated to keep you healthy.
- Parasitic STIs include trichomoniasis and pubic lice. These can be cured with creams applied to the skin or with antibiotics.

How do I know if I have an STI?

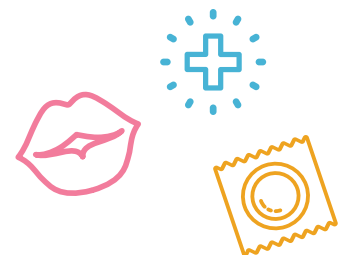
Many STIs have no signs or symptoms so you may not know if you or your partner have one until you get an STI test.

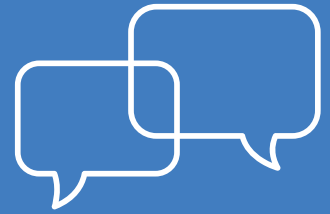
If you have any of the following symptoms, you should avoid sex and get an STI test as soon as possible:

- unusual discharge from the vagina, penis or bottom (anus)
- pain when peeing (urinating)
- unusual lumps or skin growths around the vagina, penis or bottom (anus)
- a rash
- unusual vaginal bleeding
- an itchy vagina, penis or bottom (anus)
- blisters and sores around your vagina, penis or bottom (anus)
- warts around your vagina, penis or bottom (anus)

How can I protect myself from STIs?

The best way to protect yourself from STIs is to have safe sex. Safe sex means always using a condom, dam and PrEP (for HIV only) for any type of sex. It is also important to have regular STI tests.





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When should I get an STI test?

You should get an STI test:

- every 6-12 months
- when you have a new partner
- if you notice any unusual symptoms

STI tests are easy, confidential and nothing to be ashamed about. STIs are tested for by a urine sample, a self-collected swab, or a blood test. You can get an STI test at your local doctor, a sexual health clinic and at some university health clinics. Call the NSW Sexual Health Infolink on 1800 451 624 to find a location near you.

All STIs can be treated and symptoms managed. If you test positive for an STI, it's important to let your partners know so they can get tested and treated too. If you need help contacting your partners ask your doctor, visit [Let Them Know](#) or call the [Sexual Health Infolink](#) on 1800 451 624 (free call).

What effects can STIs have?

Without proper treatment, some STIs can cause chronic pain, discomfort and lead to long term health problems. This can include not being able to have a baby (infertility).

Where can I find more information on STIs?

For information and support about STIs and your sexual health, you can call the [Sexual Health Infolink](#) on 1800 451 624 (free call) to speak to a specialist sexual health nurse. It's free, confidential, and non-judgemental. You can also visit the [International Student Health Hub](#).

If you would like an interpreter to help you access health services or information, please contact the [Translating and Interpreting Service](#) on 131 450.

Scan the QR code to find out more about STIs

