



## SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS: GETTING TESTED



### What are sexually transmitted infections?

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infections that you can get from having sex with someone who has one. There are many kinds of STIs. Some common STIs include:

- » Chlamydia
- » Gonorrhea
- » Syphilis
- » Genital herpes
- » Hepatitis B
- » Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
- » Human papillomavirus (HPV), which is the cause of genital warts and pre-cancer and cancer of the cervix, anus, and throat.

Some STIs are curable and will go away if you get treated. Other infections may not be cured, but you can manage it with treatment. It is important to get tested and treated as soon as you can.



### Should I get tested?

Anyone who is having sex can get an STI. Most people who have an STI do not know they have it because they have no symptoms or signs. The only way to know for sure is to get tested if you have:

- » pain or burning when you pee.
- » pain when you have sex.
- » an unusual discharge or odor from the penis or vagina.
- » pain, burning, or unusual bumps, lumps, sores, or rashes around the penis, vagina, or anus.
- » pain in the lower abdominal area.

Your Family PACT provider may suggest testing if:

- » Someone you have sex with has signs or symptoms of an STI.
- » You had sex with someone new and did not use a condom.
- » You had sex with more than one person in the past year and did not use a condom.
- » You have reason to believe that someone you are having sex with is having sex with someone else.
- » Your provider determines that you are at risk for any reason.





## What can I expect?

Your Family PACT provider might suggest tests that include:

- » Swabs of the vagina, cervix, penis, anus, and/or throat
- » Urine sample
- » Blood sample

These tests will be done either at your provider's office or by a lab. If you have an STI, your Family PACT provider may:

- » give you a shot or pill to take right away.
- » give you antibiotic pills or a prescription to fill.
- » ask you to come back for treatment when the lab tests come back.
- » ask you to come back for follow-up tests.
- » refer you to another health care provider for additional tests or treatment.

Your provider may tell you that your sex partner(s) should be tested and treated.



## What happens if I do not get tested and treated?

If you have an STI and leave it untreated:

- » You could spread it to other people, even your baby, if you are pregnant.
- » You could end up not being able to become pregnant or cause a pregnancy.
- » You could have a higher chance of getting HIV.
- » You could have long-term health problems including liver problems and liver cancer.



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## How do I protect myself from STIs?

- » You can abstain from any kind of sex involving the penis, vagina, mouth, or anus. This is the only sure way to prevent STIs.
- » If you choose to have sex, use a condom every time. You can use an external condom (for the penis) or an internal condom (for the vagina). Make sure to check that they are made of latex or polyurethane. Natural membrane condoms (lambskin) are not recommended for STI protection.
- » You can have sex with one person who only has sex with you.
- » If you have an STI, get tested and treated right away.
- » Get tested at least once a year or more frequently if you have multiple or anonymous sex partners (like every 3-6 months).
- » Vaccines are safe and effective ways to prevent HPV and hepatitis B infection. [HPV vaccination](#) is recommended for both boys and girls who are 11-12 years old and can be given starting at age 9.
- » Everyone through age 26 should get the HPV vaccine if they have been not vaccinated already. Some adults 27-45 years old who are not vaccinated may decide to get the HPV vaccine. HPV vaccination in this age range provides less benefit as people may have been already exposed to HPV.
- » Follow the advice of your Family PACT provider.

