



Understanding Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

STIs can spread from one person to another during sexual activities and can affect anyone, no matter their age, gender or sexual orientation. It's very important to get tested because STIs don't always exhibit obvious signs.

WHY TESTING IS KEY

If you're sexually active, it's crucial to get tested for STIs. It's a straightforward way to look after your health and the health of others. Talking with your doctor about your sexual history is important. Also, many clinics provide free or low-cost confidential testing.

WHO SHOULD GET TESTED?

Everyone over age 13 should get tested for HIV at least once.

Women under 25 years who are sexually active should get tested yearly for gonorrhea and chlamydia.

Everyone who is pregnant should get tested early in pregnancy for syphilis, HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C. Those at risk for infection should also be tested for chlamydia and gonorrhea starting early in pregnancy. It is important to get tested for HIV again during the third trimester of pregnancy to protect yourself and your baby.

Men who have sex with men should be tested:

- At least once a year for syphilis, chlamydia and gonorrhea. Those who have more than one partner or anonymous partners should be tested more frequently (i.e., every three to six months).
- At least once a year for HIV and may benefit from more frequent HIV testing (i.e., every three to six months).
- At least once a year for hepatitis C, if living with HIV.

People who have had oral or anal sex should talk with their health care provider about throat and rectal testing options.

Anyone who engages in sexual behaviors that could place them at risk for infection — or **anyone who shares drug injection equipment** — should get tested for HIV at least once a year.

QUESTIONS?

For more information on testing for STIs or advice on sexual health, talk with your health care provider. They are there to help!

For more detailed information, read the STI treatment guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment-guidelines/screening-recommendations.htm>.