

DOIN' IT RIGHT

SEXUAL HEALTH INFORMATION



AH&MRC
Aboriginal Health & Medical
Research Council of NSW



CONTENTS

Consent & Healthy Relationships

2

Safe sex – what is it & why?

4

Male Condom



6

Female Condom



8

Dams



10

Lubricant



12

Sexual Health Check-up



13

Oops...What Now?



13

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

14

Chlamydia

14

Gonorrhoea

15

HIV

16

Syphilis

17

Trichomoniasis

18

Herpes

19

Genital Warts

20

Hepatitis B

21

Hepatitis C

22

Pubic Lice and Scabies

23

Being Prepared & Responsible

24

CONSENT & HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

A healthy relationship is where you can talk openly with your partner about sex and your relationship. You should respect each other's wishes about sex and you shouldn't feel pressured to do something you don't want to or don't feel comfortable doing. There is no rush and you don't have to do things just because other people say you should.

Planned Parenthood created the acronym **FRIES** as an easy reminder about consent and sex.

CONSENT



Freely Given
Reversible
Informed
Enthusiastic
Specific

Sexual Consent

Freely Given

No shaming or pressure to have sex and it can't be given freely if you are intoxicated from alcohol or drugs (drunk or high).

Reversible

You can change your mind at any time.

Informed

If you agree to use condoms and then one isn't used or is removed during sex (stealthing) this isn't consent and is against the law in NSW (and other Australian states)!

Enthusiastic

Really wanting to do it, not just saying yes.

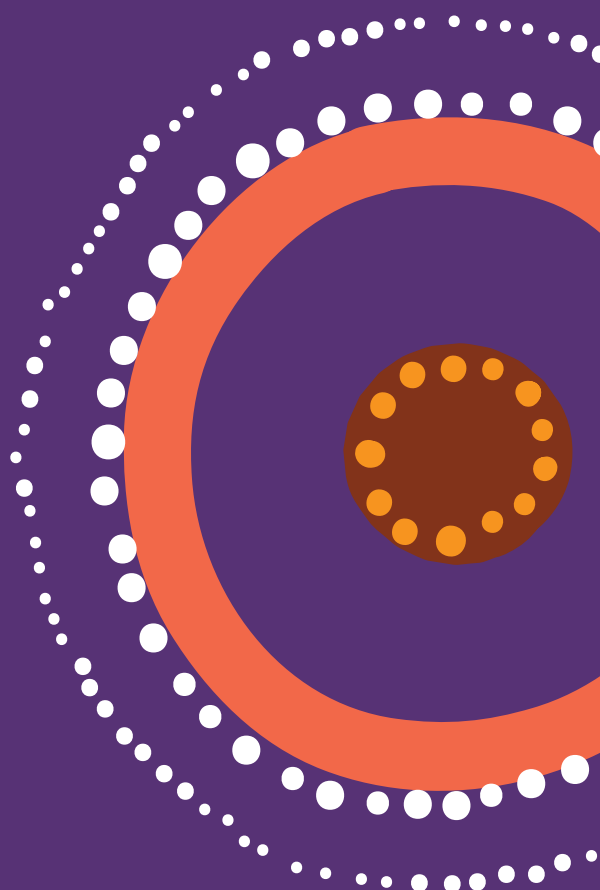
Specific

Eg. Consenting to oral sex but not vaginal sex.

If you have experienced sexual assault it's important to tell someone.

In an emergency situation call 000.

To talk to someone about it call 1800 RESPECT 24 hours a day.



SAFE SEX – WHAT IS IT & WHY?

Safe sex is caring about your own health and your partner's when having sex. Most sexual activities carry a level of risk of transmitting Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's). STIs can affect anyone – no matter your age, gender or sexual attraction!

Not all STIs are the same and the symptoms and treatment can also be very different. Some STIs are caused by bacteria e.g. gonorrhoea, some are caused by viruses e.g. HIV while others are caused by parasites e.g. pubic lice. If STIs are left untreated they can cause issues with having children (infertility) or other health problems. Some STIs can be passed onto babies from their mothers during pregnancy or delivery. Many STI's can be cured with antibiotics.

It is common not to have any symptoms so people may not know they have an STI unless they go and get a check-up. There are more details about different types of STI's at the end of this booklet.

The most common way Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are passed on is through unprotected vaginal, oral or anal sex however there are lots of ways that STIs can be caught. They can be passed on by skin to skin contact or by the exchange of bodily fluids such as blood, pre-cum, semen (cum) or vaginal fluids during sex. Different sexual activities are safer for some STIs but not others.

Sexual activities include:

Vaginal sex

Penis in vagina.

Oral sex

Licking, sucking, kissing partners' genitals.

Anal sex

Penis in anus.

Sharing sex toys

Manual sex

Touching/fingering partners' vagina, penis or anus.

Oral Anal Sex

Licking, kissing partners' anus

Naked dry sex

Rubbing bodies together with no clothes on but no penetration.

For all sexual activities there are ways to reduce your risk of STIs e.g. by using a barrier method like condoms or dams with water based lubricant (see pages 6-12 in booklet) when sexually active.

Below we have listed some different sexual activities and the risk of passing on STI's.

LOW RISK SEX ACTS INCLUDE: ✓

Body rubbing through clothes (also known as dry sex or dry humping).

Mutual masturbation.

Kissing, hugging or tickling your partner.

Vaginal or anal intercourse using a condom and lube.

Oral sex using a condom or dam.

Using sex toys with a new condom for each partner.

HIGH RISK SEX ACTS INCLUDE: ✗

Unprotected vaginal, oral or anal intercourse including pulling out. Even before you ejaculate (cum) the fluid that leaks from the penis (pre cum) can pass on STIs.

Anal intercourse with a condom but without lubricant is high risk because the condom is more likely to break.

Using oil-based lubricant (like moisturiser, cooking oil or Vaseline) with condoms can cause the condom to break.

Oral sex without a condom or dam and with cuts or sores in the mouth (the cuts might be too small to notice!)

Sharing sex toys without using a condom or not changing the condom between partners.

Body rubbing (genital-to genital).

MALE CONDOM - EXTERNAL



What are external condoms?

External condoms are a thin latex or polyurethane (non-latex) sheath that is worn over an erect penis or sex toy and provide a barrier from body fluids during sex.

How do they work?

Condoms collect semen (cum) and form a barrier between people having vaginal, anal or oral sex. They are best used with a water-based lubricant (lube) to avoid tearing or breaking.

How effective are they?

Condoms are the best way of preventing most STIs. If used correctly, they are also up to 98% effective at preventing pregnancy but typical use (meaning not always used correctly or consistently) means they are only 88% effective.

Where can I get them?

You can get free condoms from your local Aboriginal Medical Service, Youth Centre or Sexual Health Clinic. You can also buy condoms and lube from chemists, supermarkets, petrol stations, convenience stores and some vending machines in clubs, pubs and bars.

If the condom broke or slipped off during sex, consider:

Emergency contraception – visit your local AMS or Pharmacy.

Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), if you are at risk of possible HIV exposure – call the NSW PEP Hotline on 1800 737 669.

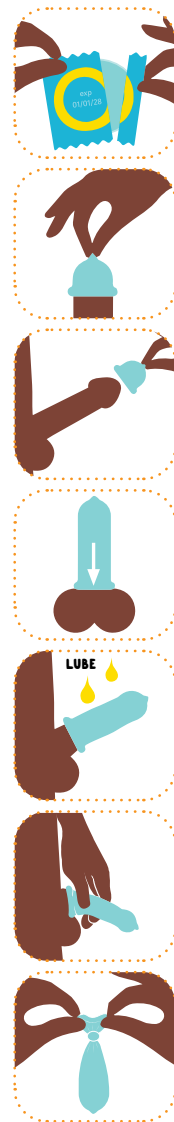
Getting a sexual health check up – visit your local AMS, doctor or sexual health clinic.

Anything else I should know?

- Only use a condom once.
- Never put two condoms on at the same time as they are more likely to break.
- Never use the same condom for vaginal and anal sex.
- Never ejaculate (cum) more than once in the same condom.
- Keep condoms in a cool dry place out of direct sunlight.

How to use them:

- Check the expiry date – throw them away if they have expired!
- Carefully tear the packet open – don't use your teeth or scissors to open the packet.
- Squeeze the tip of the condom with your fingertips (this gets rid of air and leaves space for semen/cum)
- Make sure the penis is erect (hard) before you put the condom on.
- Check condom is the right way so it unrolls easily.
- While still between the fingertips, place the condom on the head of the penis
- With the other hand roll the condom down to the base of the penis near the balls.
- Put some water-based lubricant on the outside of the condom – especially for anal sex to avoid tearing.
- Sexy time!
- If you think the condom has broken or come off during sex pull out and replace the condom.
- After sex, when you pull out hold the condom near the base of the penis so it doesn't slip off. This is best done when the penis is still hard.
- Slowly take the condom off after you're completely out of your partner.
- Tie a knot in the end of the condom and throw it in the bin (not the toilet!)



FUN FACT:

The average speed guys ejaculate is **45km/hr!**



FEMALE CONDOM - INTERNAL



What are internal condoms?

An internal condom is made from a latex-free synthetic rubber called nitrile. They are a soft, one size only pouch. They have two rings, the ring on the closed end is inserted in the vagina (or anus) and the open ring remains outside of the vagina and act as a barrier from body fluids during sex.

How do they work?

The internal condom acts as a barrier and prevents semen and other body fluids when having vaginal or anal sex.

How effective are they?

Condoms are the best way of preventing most STIs.

Internal condoms are better than external condoms at preventing skin-to-skin transmitted STIs like genital warts (HPV) and genital herpes (HSV). If used correctly, they are also up to 95% effective at preventing pregnancy but typical use (meaning not always used correctly or consistently) means they are only 79% effective.

Where can I get them?

Internal condoms are usually more expensive and harder to get than the external condom. You can check with your local family planning clinic, sex shop and some pharmacies also stock them.

If the condom broke or slipped off during sex, consider:

Emergency contraception – visit your local AMS or Pharmacy.

Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), if you are at risk of possible HIV exposure – call the NSW PEP Hotline on 1800 737 669.

Getting a sexual health check up – visit your local AMS, doctor or sexual health clinic.

Anything else I should know?

- Don't use a female condom together with a male condom – this can risk breakage.
- Never use an internal condom more than once.
- Never use the same condom for vaginal and anal sex.
- Keep condoms in a cool dry place out of direct sunlight.

How to use them:

- Check the expiry date – throw it away if it has expired!
- Carefully tear the packet open – don't use your teeth or scissors to open the packet.
- Squeeze the smaller ring at the closed end of the condom and gently insert it into the vagina (like a tampon) – you might need to find a comfortable position like lying down, squatting or raising a leg on a chair to do this.
- Using a finger inside the condom, make sure the condom isn't twisted and the inner ring is as far as it can go into the vagina.
- Make sure that the large ring at the open end of the condom covers the area around the vaginal opening.
- It's best to guide the penis into the female condom so it doesn't go between the condom and the side of the vagina.
- Sexy time!
- Remove the female condom immediately after sex by gently pulling it out – you can twist the large ring to prevent semen (cum) leaking out.
- Tie a knot in the end and throw the condom in the bin (not the toilet!)



FUN FACT:

The female orgasm, on average, lasts around 13-51 seconds.

This is longer than the typical male orgasm, which lasts for 6 seconds on average.



DAMS



What are dams?

Dams are small, thin, square pieces of latex that are used for oral-vaginal or oral-anal sex. They get their name from their use in dental procedures.

How do they work?

Dams help to reduce the transmission of STIs during oral sex on the vagina or anus by acting as a barrier to vaginal and anal secretions that contain bacteria and viruses. They also come in a variety of sizes and flavours.

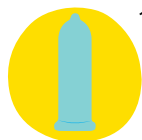
How effective are they?

Because dams act as a barrier to body fluids, they help reduce STI transmission. Many STIs, such as herpes and genital warts can be transmitted through oral sex. Like condoms, dams must be used correctly and consistently to be effective. **They do not prevent pregnancy!**

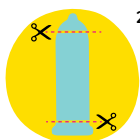
Where can I get them?

Your local Aboriginal Medical Service, some chemists, your local Family Planning Clinic, Youth Health Centres or Sexual Health Clinics. You can also cut a condom and use it as a dam. (See diagram below).

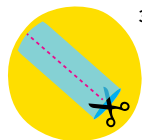
How to make a dam from a condom



1. Unroll the condom.



2. Cut off the top and bottom of the condom.



3. Cut down the side of the condom.



4. Lay flat to cover vaginal opening or anus

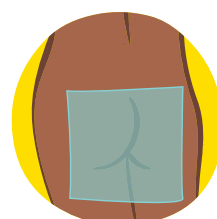
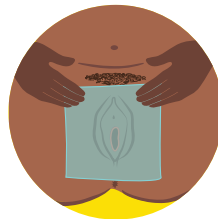
Anything else I should know?

Dams should be stored in a cool dry place and not exposed to direct sunlight. They also perish after a time, however they do not always have a use by date on the packet. You can check for any perishing by holding it up to a strong light and looking for any thin places or holes.

How to use them:

Although it may seem a little awkward to use at first, dams are extremely easy to use.

- Before using the dam you should rinse off any powder and check it to make sure there are no holes by holding it up to a light. Then hold it against your partner's vagina or anus so that it covers it completely. You can use lube on the vagina or anus before using the dam, which can help make it feel good.
- The dam should **ONLY** be used on one side. Don't flip the dam over for another round because you'll come in contact with the stuff you're trying to avoid.
- Don't re-use a dam on another body part (like from anus to vagina or the other way) because you can transfer germs from one body area to another on the same person.
- Do not re-use a dam - they can only be used once.
- After use, wrap it in a tissue and throw it in the bin (not the toilet!)



LUBRICANT



What is Lubricant?

Lubricant commonly known as 'lube' is a liquid or gel that reduces friction during sex (making things move more smoothly). There are a few different types of lube available, but **the best one to use with condoms and dams is a water-based lubricant, which we'll yarn about here.**

How effective is lube?

Lube is very effective at making things slippery so you don't risk breaking the condom or dam when having sex and reducing your risk of some STIs.

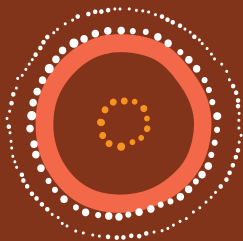
How do I use it?

Always use lube for anal sex to reduce the risk of breaking or tearing of the skin and condom.

- Make sure you have the right lube (avoid oil-based lubes or using Vaseline, moisturisers or massage oils as they can break down the latex in condoms and dams).
- Get a small amount of lube (about the size of a pea – remember you can always add more later).
- For external condoms – put the lube on the outside of the condom before you have vaginal or anal sex.
- For internal condoms – put the lube on the penis or sex toy before sex. For dams – put the lube under the dam and in contact with the vagina or anus (bottom).

Where can I get it?

You can get free lube from your local Aboriginal Medical Service, Youth Centre or Sexual Health Clinic. You can also buy lube from chemists, supermarkets, petrol stations, convenience stores and sex shops.



ROUTINE SEXUAL HEALTH CHECK UP

The benefits of getting yourself checked.

Once you become sexually active it is a good idea to have a sexual health check-up. You can have a sexual health check-up with an Aboriginal Health Practitioner, nurse or doctor free of charge at your local Aboriginal Health Service or Sexual health clinic. You can also see your doctor for a sexual health check but make sure you find out if there are any costs involved.

The sexual health check is easy to do and confidential (kept between you and the clinician). The clinician will ask you some questions, you might feel a bit embarrassed, but it will help the clinician assess your risks and offer appropriate tests.

Most of the time you will only need to provide a urine (pee) sample and a blood sample.

It's important to have a STI check-up:

- **Every 6 to 12 months (if you are under 30) or when you have your health check (715).**
- **When you change sexual partners.**
- **If you have unprotected sex.**
- **If you have any pain or changes with your genitals or body.**

OOOPS...WHAT NOW?



If the condom broke or slipped off during sex:

Get a sexual health check with your local AMS, doctor or sexual health clinic and discuss your options.

Options may include:

Emergency contraception – visit your local AMS or Pharmacy.

Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), if you are at risk of possible HIV exposure – call the NSW PEP Hotline on **1800 737 669**.

DOXY-PEP You may be suitable for Doxy-PEP. This is an oral dose of doxycycline (antibiotic) taken within 72 hours (3 days) of having unprotected sex, that protects against Syphilis and Chlamydia.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

CHLAMYDIA (cla-mid-eya)

Chlamydia is a bacterial infection. It is one of the most common STIs in Australia, especially in people who are under 30 years old. Chlamydia can infect the urethra (wee hole), vagina, cervix (neck of the uterus), anus (bottom), throat and eyes.

How is it transmitted/passed on?

Chlamydia is passed on by having unprotected sex. The bacteria don't live long outside the body so you can't catch it from toilets, swimming pools, spas or from everyday contact with people.

How would I know if I had Chlamydia?

Most people don't have any symptoms with chlamydia. For those that do have symptoms, women may experience a change in their vaginal discharge; sex may be painful or you can have bleeding between your periods or after sex. For men they may notice a burning when they urinate (pee) or a discharge from their penis.

How to test for Chlamydia?

Chlamydia is easy to test with a urine (pee) test. A more accurate test for women is by taking a swab from the lower part of the vagina – this can be self-collected and shouldn't be painful.

How is Chlamydia treated?

If your test comes back positive for chlamydia it is very easy to treat by taking a course of oral antibiotics. It's important that you don't have unprotected sex (vaginal, oral or anal) for at least 7 days after being treated as you could still pass it on to someone else.

How can I prevent Chlamydia?

Chlamydia can be prevented by the correct use of condoms or dams with lube when having vaginal, oral or anal sex.

Anything else I should know?

If not treated, chlamydia can sometimes lead to pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) which can lead to infertility (hard to get pregnant) and cause other health problems like chronic pelvic pain.

GONORRHOEA (gonna-ria)

Gonorrhoea is a bacterial infection, sometimes called 'the clap'. It can infect the urethra (wee hole), vagina, cervix (neck of the uterus), anus (bottom) and throat.

How is it transmitted/passed on?

Gonorrhoea is passed on by having unprotected sex.

How would I know if I had Gonorrhoea?

Most women don't have any symptoms with gonorrhoea. If they do, they may have pain when urinating (peeing), vaginal discharge or pain with sex.

Most men will experience symptoms like pain when urinating or discharge from the penis.

How to test for Gonorrhoea?

Gonorrhoea is easy to test with a urine (pee) test. A more accurate test for women is by taking a swab from the lower part of the vagina – this can be self-collected and shouldn't be painful.

If you have discharge from the penis or vagina the doctor may also take a swab.

How is Gonorrhoea treated?

Gonorrhoea is easily treated with two antibiotics. One antibiotic is an injection and the other is an oral antibiotic.

It's important that you don't have unprotected sex (vaginal, oral or anal) for 7 days after being treated (or when symptoms go – whichever is longer) as you could still pass it on to someone else.

How can I prevent Gonorrhoea?

Gonorrhoea can be prevented by the correct use of condoms or dams with lube when having vaginal, oral or anal sex.

Anything else I should know?

If not treated, gonorrhoea can sometimes lead to pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) which can lead to infertility (hard to get pregnant) and cause other health problems like chronic pelvic pain.

HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV)

HIV is a virus that causes damage to the body's immune system.

How is it transmitted/passed on?

HIV can be found in semen, vaginal secretions and blood. HIV is usually passed on by vaginal or anal sex without a condom; sharing sex toys; sharing drug-injecting equipment and piercing or tattooing equipment.

It can also be passed on from a HIV positive mother to her baby during pregnancy, at childbirth or when breast feeding.

It can't be transmitted by hugging kissing, sharing cigarettes, sharing food or drinks, toilet seats or mosquito bites.

How would I know if I had HIV?

Most people with HIV look and feel perfectly healthy. Some people may develop flu-like symptoms that include fever, sore throat, body ache, diarrhoea or a rash on the body. These symptoms usually appear within a few weeks of being infected. However, many people have no symptoms at all. If not detected early, HIV can take years for symptoms like oral thrush, diarrhoea, weight loss, skin infections or herpes zoster to appear.

How to test for HIV?

A blood sample is taken to test for HIV.

How is HIV treated?

Although we know a lot about HIV there is still no cure or vaccine. Treatments for HIV have improved dramatically over the last 10 years. With lifelong treatment and monitoring, people with HIV can live long healthy lives.

Telling partners

Any current and/or previous sexual partner/s will need to be tested for HIV to reduce the risk of further transmission. Your doctor can support you in contacting your sexual partners.

How can I prevent HIV?

HIV can be prevented by the correct use of condoms or dams with lube when having vaginal, oral or anal sex. Avoid sharing drug-injecting equipment (fits or syringes) or piercing or tattooing equipment with anyone.

If you have been exposed to HIV, there is a 28-day treatment that can prevent you acquiring HIV. This medication is called PEP (Post Exposure Prophylaxis). If you think you may have been exposed, ask your local Aboriginal Medical Service, doctor, sexual health clinic or Emergency Department for more information – you need to do this as soon as possible and not more than 72 hours after exposure! Note, PEP may not be recommended in every case but if you are unsure about your risk or need further information and advice, phone the **24hr PEP Hotline on 1800 737 669**

Anything else I should know?

Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) can be taken by anyone, regardless of gender or sexuality, that is wanting to reduce their risk of HIV acquisition – see www.pan.org to see if this might suit you?

SYPHILIS (sifa-lis)

Syphilis is a bacterial infection. If not detected and treated early, it can lead to serious health problems later in life.

How is it transmitted/passed on?

Syphilis is passed on by having unprotected sex.

How would I know if I had Syphilis?

Sores/ulcers called chancres (shan-kuhs) may appear around the genitals and/or mouth. They are not usually painful.

Some people may have a rash on their upper body, soles of their feet or hands.

Symptoms may be so mild that you don't notice any at all.

How to test for Syphilis?

A blood sample is taken to test for syphilis.

If you have a sore/ulcer, then the doctor will take a swab of this and send it to be tested as well.

If you have ever had syphilis, it will always show up on later blood tests. It is important to advise your doctor so they can determine whether you've been adequately treated and there is no current infection.

How is Syphilis treated?

Syphilis is treated with antibiotic injections. Depending on what stage of the infection you are in will depend on how many injections you will need.

It's important that you don't have unprotected sex (vaginal, oral or anal) for 7 days after being treated (or until the course is completed) as you could still pass it on to someone else.

Your sexual partners will need to be treated.

How can I prevent Syphilis?

Syphilis can be prevented by the correct use of condoms or dams with lube when having vaginal, oral or anal sex. Avoid having sex with someone if you notice a sore/ulcer on their genitals.

Anything else I should know?

If left untreated syphilis can lead to a range of symptoms affecting the brain, nerves, eyes, heart, blood vessels, spinal cord, liver, bones and joints that can be fatal.

When an infected mother passes it on to her unborn baby there is a possibility of miscarriage, preterm delivery or being born with congenital syphilis. Congenital syphilis can cause multiple health conditions for a baby and sometimes be fatal.

TRICHOMONIASIS (trike-o-moan-eye-a-sis)

Trichomoniasis, commonly known as Trich (trike), is a genital infection caused by a parasite. It prefers to live in the vagina but can also live in the penis (urethra/wee-hole).

How is it transmitted/passed on?

Trich is passed on by vaginal sex without a condom.

How would I know if I had Trichomoniasis?

Many women don't have any symptoms but for some women they may have a frothy, yellow-greenish discharge from the vagina, itching or pain in the area. Symptoms are rare in men but it may cause pain when peeing.

How to test for Trichomoniasis?

Generally, trich is only tested if you have symptoms or are in a high prevalence area.

Trich is easy to test with a urine (pee) test. A more accurate test for women is by taking a swab from the lower part of the vagina – this can be self-collected and shouldn't be painful.

If you have discharge from the vagina the doctor may also take a swab.

How is Trichomoniasis treated?

Trich is easily treated with a single dose of antibiotics. You should avoid alcohol during and for 24 hours after taking these antibiotics.

It's important that you don't have unprotected sex (vaginal, oral or anal) for 7 days after being treated as you could still pass it on to someone else.

Your current sexual partner/s will need presumptive treatment (meaning they get treated even before the results come back), so they don't give it back to you.

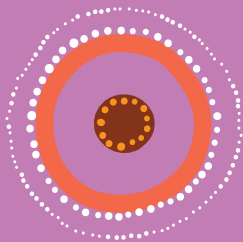
How can I prevent Trichomoniasis?

Trich can be prevented by the correct use of condoms or dams with lube when having vaginal, oral or anal sex.

Anything else I should know?

If you are pregnant, Trich can lead to low birthweight and preterm delivery.

The presence of trich can also increase the risk of getting HIV, as well as other STIs like chlamydia and gonorrhoea (WHO, 2023).



HERPES - HSV (her-pee-z)

Herpes is a very common STI caused by the herpes simplex virus (HSV). There are two types of the virus: HSV1 and HSV2. Both can occur on the lips, mouth, genitals and anus (bottom). HSV on the lips and mouth are called cold sores. HSV on the genital and anal areas are called genital herpes.

How is it transmitted/passed on?

Herpes is passed on by having unprotected sex. It can also be passed on without penetrative sex due to skin-to-skin contact. Herpes can also be passed on through asymptomatic shedding (this is where someone who has the infection sheds the virus from their skin without knowing it because they don't have any symptoms or aren't aware of them).

How would I know if I had Genital Herpes?

Herpes affects different people in different ways. Some people may get painful blisters or ulcers and flu-like symptoms when they first get infected. While others may only get a red patch with tiny breaks in the genital skin. Some people may only have symptoms once while others have symptoms occasionally. Some people don't get symptoms at all which means you can have genital herpes and not know it! Some people may get symptoms before the blisters/ulcers appear like a tingling sensation, nerve pain, itching or generally feeling sick or irritable.

How to test for Genital Herpes?

You won't get a test for herpes unless you have any blisters/ulcers or sores around the genitals and the doctor will take a swab sample from these.

How is Genital Herpes treated?

There is no cure for herpes but there is medication that can be taken to help reduce symptoms and decrease the chance of passing it on to your sexual partners. If someone has multiple outbreaks, they may need to take the medication continuously for a period of time to stop the outbreaks occurring.

For additional information and resources about genital herpes go to www.herpess.org.nz

How can I prevent Genital Herpes?

Genital herpes transmission can be reduced by the correct use of condoms or dams with lube when having vaginal, oral or anal sex. Avoid having sex with someone if you notice a blister/ulcer or sore on their genitals.

Anything else I should know?

Herpes on the mouth (cold sores) can be passed on to the genitals during oral sex so don't give or receive oral sex if either of you have cold sores!

Let your doctor know if you have herpes and are pregnant as it can affect the baby during birth. Although neonatal herpes is rare it can be fatal.

GENITAL WARTS (HPV)

Genital Warts are caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) or wart virus. They are warts on the skin of your genitals and anus (bottom).

How is it transmitted/passed on?

The wart virus is passed on by direct skin-to-skin contact with someone who has the virus. Transmission mainly takes place when there is a visible wart, but it can also happen when there is no wart present.

How would I know if I had Genital Warts?

Genital warts look just like fleshy lumps and bumps around your genital area. They can sometimes be itchy but aren't usually painful. The virus that causes genital warts can sometimes show up on cervical screening.

Genital warts are very common with up to 90% of the sexually active population having the wart virus or having had it in the past. Only 10% of sexually active people develop visible genital warts so most people have no idea that they carry the virus!

How to test for Genital Warts?

There are no tests for genital warts but are diagnosed by visible symptoms.

How is Genital Warts treated?

There are several ways to remove warts using different methods. Your Aboriginal Medical Service, doctor or sexual health clinic can give you a prescription for cream or paint that you apply to remove the wart or they can use cryotherapy (freezing the wart). Although these methods will remove the wart (sometimes over multiple treatments), there is no cure for HPV.

How can I prevent Genital Warts?

Genital wart transmission can be reduced by the correct use of condoms or dams with lube when having vaginal, oral or anal sex. Avoid having sex with someone if you notice a visible wart on their genitals. Cervical screening should be undertaken regularly (every 5 years) unless advised otherwise by your doctor.

Anything else I should know?

HPV vaccines for both boys and girls are recommended when aged 12-13 years. They protect against the most common types of HPV that cause genital warts and some strains that cause HPV related cancers, especially cervical cancer.

It's important to get the vaccine before first sexual contact, however people up to the age of 26 who haven't had any HPV vaccines should ask their doctor about getting them now. The HPV vaccines are given as a single dose.

HEPATITIS B

Hepatitis B is a virus that causes inflammation of the liver. It is different from Hepatitis A and Hepatitis C as it is passed on and treated differently.

How is it transmitted/passed on?

Hepatitis B is found in semen, vaginal secretions, saliva and blood. It is passed on when the virus enters the persons body.

For example, through:

- Sex without a condom (vaginal, anal or oral)
- Sharing drug injecting equipment
- From an infected mother to her baby during pregnancy, childbirth and/or breastfeeding
- Sharing tattoo or piercing equipment
- Sharing personal items that may carry blood such as toothbrushes and razors
- Needlestick injury

How would I know if I had Hepatitis B?

Some people have no symptoms while other people develop symptoms within 60 days of infection. Symptoms can include a flu-like illness, nausea, vomiting, stomach pains or yellowing of the eyes and skin (jaundice).

How to test for Hepatitis B?

A blood sample is taken to check your Hepatitis B status.

How is Hepatitis B treated?

Not everyone needs treatment for Hepatitis B as your body may clear the infection itself. Your doctor will discuss your options with you and in some cases will refer you to a specialist to monitor and manage your Hepatitis B infection to avoid damage to your liver.

Who else needs to be tested?

Any sexual partners, household contacts or close family members from 6 months before your symptoms developed will need to be contacted and tested. Your doctor can help you in this process.

How can I prevent Hepatitis B?

There are several ways Hepatitis B can be prevented:

- Check you have been vaccinated.
- Practice safe sex.
- Don't share drug injecting equipment
- Don't share personal items like toothbrushes, razors or sex toys

Anything else I should know?

Acute hepatitis B is when you have the virus for less than 6 months and then your body naturally clears the virus.

Chronic hepatitis B is when you have the virus for 6 months or longer. About 5% of people who develop chronic hepatitis B have it for life.

To keep your liver healthy, make sure you eat healthy foods, exercise and avoid drinking too much alcohol.

HEPATITIS C

Hepatitis C is a virus that causes inflammation of the liver. It is different from Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B as it is passed on and treated differently.

How is it transmitted/passed on?

Hepatitis C is passed on through blood-to-blood contact. It is mainly passed on through sharing drug injecting equipment. It is also transmitted through unsterile tattooing and piercing equipment. It is not considered to be a sexually transmitted infection although if there is any blood present during sex there can be a risk of transmission, for example during menstruation or if there is a cut or sore in the genital/oral area.

It is not passed on through kissing, hugging, sharing cigarettes, sharing food or drinks, toilet seats or mosquitos.

How would I know if I had Hepatitis C?

It's uncommon for people to experience symptoms of Hepatitis C in the early stage, so it is important to have a hepatitis C test 3 months after exposure.

Symptoms of chronic hepatitis C can include nausea, appetite loss, feeling tired, depression and can lead to liver damage and cirrhosis if left untreated.

How to test for Hepatitis C?

A blood sample is taken to check for hepatitis C antibodies.

If you have previously had hepatitis C (naturally cleared or treated) you will need to have a hepatitis C PCR test to confirm if you have a current infection.

How is Hepatitis C treated?

There are two treatment options for hepatitis C that can be accessed from your Aboriginal Medical Service or doctor.

Once hepatitis C is treated (or cleared), it does not mean that you can't get it again if you are still exposed to transmission risks.

How can I prevent Hepatitis C?

There is no vaccine to prevent hepatitis C.

Avoiding blood-to-blood contact is the best way to prevent hepatitis C, so:

- Use your own, clean drug injecting equipment
- Ensure tattooing and piercing equipment is sterile
- Don't share personal items like toothbrushes or razors
- Have safe sex with the correct use of condoms or dams with lube when having vaginal, oral or anal sex.

Anything else I should know?

Acute hepatitis C is when you have the virus for less than 6 months. 1 in 4 people will clear acute hepatitis C by themselves within that period.

Chronic hepatitis C is when you have the virus for 6 months or longer.

To keep your liver healthy, make sure you eat healthy foods, exercise and avoid drinking too much alcohol.

PUBIC LICE AND SCABIES

Both pubic lice (also known as 'crabs') and scabies are tiny mites (a kind of insect). Pubic lice hang onto the hair and scabies mites burrow under the skin.

How is it transmitted/passed on?

These mites are passed on by close physical contact including sexual contact and sharing clothes, towels, bed linen and beds. There does not need to be penetrative sex for these to be passed on.

How would I know if I had pubic lice and scabies?

For pubic lice you may have itching in the genital area and may be able to see tiny lice hanging onto the pubic hair. For scabies, the most common complaint is intense itching and a rash in the genital area. It can also occur on other parts of the body such as between the fingers and toes. You can often see trails on the skin where the mites are burrowing under.

How to test for pubic lice and scabies?

There are no tests for pubic lice and scabies as they are diagnosed by visible symptoms.

How are pubic lice and scabies treated?

You can clear pubic lice and scabies by using special creams and shampoos. See your local chemist, Aboriginal Medical Service, doctor or sexual health clinic.

You will also need to wash any clothing, sheets and towels that have been used or touched by the affected areas.

Telling partners

People you have had sex with and even people who have been in your house need to check themselves and get treated if needed so they don't give it back to you or pass it on to someone else.

How can I prevent pubic lice and scabies?

Preventing pubic lice and scabies can be difficult as they are passed on by close physical contact.

Anything else I should know?

Pubic lice and scabies won't kill you, but they can be very uncomfortable and easily given to people you have close contact with. It's best to get them treated as soon as you can!

BEING PREPARED & RESPONSIBLE

Be prepared!

Remember to always carry condoms (and lube) with you so you have them when you need them. Make sure you regularly check the expiry dates and make sure they are in good condition before you use them.



Telling partners

Any sexual partners will need to be contacted if you return a positive STI result and make an appointment to be tested and/or treated. The doctor will talk to you about the timeframe depending on the STI you have. This is important so they don't pass it back to you or someone else.

With HSV and HPV it can be hard to know when you first got the virus. It's important not to have sex when you have an outbreak or visible symptoms and to practice safe sex to reduce the risk of transmission. Telling partners is a personal decision.

You can contact your sexual partners yourself either directly or by sending an anonymous SMS or email using www.bettertoknow.org.au

Alternatively, your doctor, nurse or Aboriginal Health Practitioner can contact your sexual partners anonymously for you to let them know they should be tested.



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