

What Puts Me at Risk for an STI?

What is an STI?

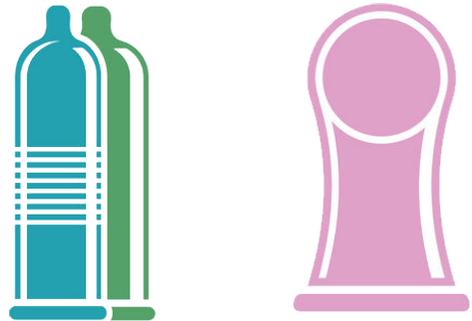
A Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) is an infection that is spread by sexual contact. STIs can often go unnoticed due to little to no signs or symptoms, but they can also be very painful. Some STIs can be treated and cured, others stay with you for your lifetime and can affect your health. **Apart from colds and flu, STIs are the most common, easily spread infections in the United States.**

How are STIs Transmitted?

Anyone who has sexual contact with another person may get an STI. This includes skin to skin contact with genitals, mouth, rectum, or bodily fluids. STIs don't always cause symptoms. Even if there are no symptoms, your health can be affected.

The following can increase the risk of getting STIs:

- More than one sexual partner.
- Unprotected sex without a condom
- A partner who has more than one sexual partner
- Sex with someone who has an STI
- Drug use or a partner that uses drugs, specifically drugs injected via a vein



Male Condom vs. Female Condom

Most common STIs

Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Genital herpes, Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, Human papillomavirus (HPV) infection, Syphilis, Trichomoniasis (often called "trich"), and Hepatitis B.

How Can I Reduce the Risk of Getting an STI?

- Know your sexual partners. Your partner's sexual history is as important as your own. The more partners you or your partners have the higher your risk of getting STI.
- Use a latex condom. Using a latex condom every time you have vaginal, oral, or anal sex decreases the exchange of infection from person to person.
- Always wear a condom if you are participating in risky sex practices. Sexual acts that tear or break the skin carry a higher risk of STIs. Even small cuts that do not bleed can let germs pass easily.
- Get immunized. Ask your provider about vaccines that can help prevent hepatitis B and some types of HPV.
- Stay up to date with pelvic exams and pap smears.
- If you know your partner is HIV positive, ask your provider about preventive therapies.

If you have any risks for STIs or think you may have one, you should get tested. Talk to your provider today.