



Yarning

about STIs



family
planning
australia

Reproductive & Sexual Health



- The river. The blue circles within represents waterholes
- Represents people and the many people who support the journey
- Represents the journey
- Represents moving through country
- Represents Elders, providing guidance and support
- Represents the flowing layers of land, the beautiful ochres of country

Description:

This artwork tells a journey of strength and support of an individual and their development. Through the guidance and support of Elders, strong trusting relationships, and reliable access and connections, the individual can develop healthy physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing. Through the journey from the bottom to top, there is guidance and support from Elders, continuing on the path of building trust (circle 1), relationships (circle 2) and access (circle 3) building our physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing which is illustrated through a large healthy tree. Surrounding the artwork is representative of our beautiful country which is important to Aboriginal people and our connections to land.

About:

Belinda Coe is a proud Kamillaroi woman with family ties to Wiradjuri and Wailwan country. Raised in Gilgandra and Condobolin NSW, her connection to identity and country is strong. She has been actively working as a modern Aboriginal artist over the last 6 years and most recently in digital art. Belinda enjoys the storytelling through Aboriginal art, creating meaning and connections for all her clients' stories.

This resource was co-designed through consultation with the Aboriginal community. We thank the participants who took the time to share their feedback, thoughts and ideas.

In the spirit of reconciliation Family Planning Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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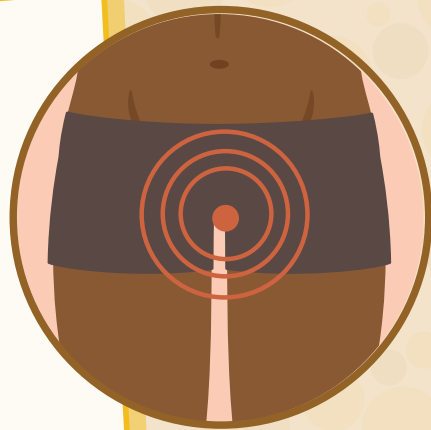
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What are STIs?

STIs (sexually transmissible infections) are infections that are passed from one person to another through sexual activity.

STIs can infect different parts of the body including the:

- vagina
- penis
- testicles (balls)
- mouth
- anus (bottom)
- throat



Did you know?

You might hear the term STDs used in the community. The term "STIs" is most commonly used by doctors and nurses. Both terms mean the same thing.

There are many different types of STIs. The most common include:

- Chlamydia
- Gonorrhoea
- Syphilis
- Herpes
- HIV/AIDS

Most STIs have no symptoms. That's why you need to have regular check-ups if you are sexually active or if you didn't use protection (condom or dam) during sex.

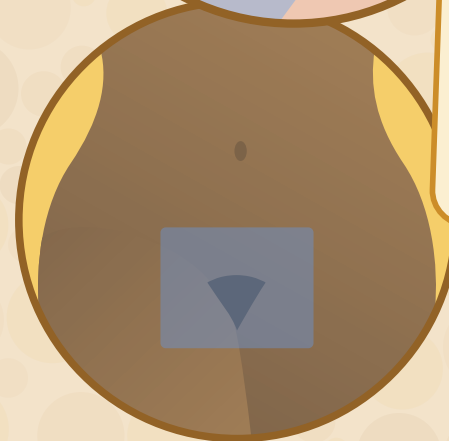
Condoms

Condoms are worn on an erect penis and provide a barrier which catches semen and stops the transfer of bodily fluids between partners.



Dams

Dams are a thin sheet of plastic or rubber you can place over an anus (bottom) or vulva (female genitals) during oral (mouth) sex to prevent catching STIs. Condoms can also be used during oral sex to prevent STIs.



How do you get STIs?

You can catch or pass on an STI through all types of unprotected sexual activity (not using a condom or dam) including:

- vaginal sex
- oral sex (mouth) and
- anal sex

You can also catch or give someone an STI through skin-to-skin contact of the genitals (private parts) such as naked cuddling, fingering and hand jobs, as well as through sharing sex toys. Anyone who has any type of unprotected sex can get an STI.

Did you know?

Unprotected sex includes any sexual activity without the use of a condom or dam

How do you know if you have an STI?

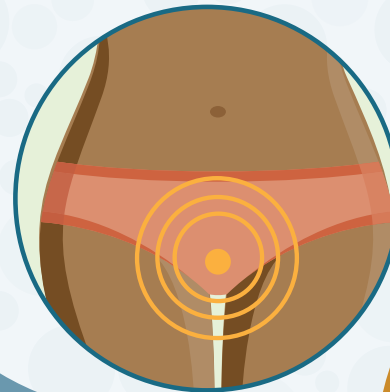
Most people with an STI have no signs or symptoms. This makes them so common and easy to spread, as you may not know you have it.

If you do have symptoms they might include:

- an unusual discharge from the penis, vagina or anus (bottom)
- unusual lumps or skin growths
- pain when peeing
- itching, burning or pain in the genitals



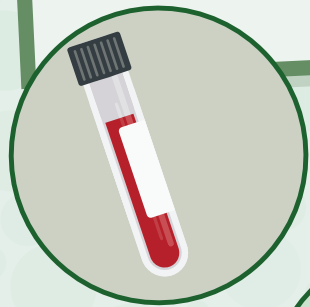
The only way to know for sure if you have an STI is to get tested



What is an STI test?

An STI test is a simple, quick and easy way to check to see if you have an STI. This is also known as a "STI screen".

It normally involves:



Having a blood sample taken

Rubbing a swab on the tip of the penis, in the entrance of the vagina or over the anus (bottom)



Weeing in a small cup

No one has to see your private parts to have an STI test. You can do the swabs on yourself either in the clinic bathroom or behind a curtain. A doctor or nurse will take your blood sample. If you do have symptoms, a doctor or nurse may ask permission to look at the area.

In the appointment, the doctor or nurse will ask you questions about your sexual history and the type of sex you are having. You should answer the questions honestly as it will help the doctor or nurse to know what tests you need.

Anything you say in your sexual health check is kept private. Nothing can be shared with anyone unless you say it's OK.

Who needs an STI test?

If you are having vaginal, oral (mouth) or anal sex you should get regular STI tests every 6 to 12 months to stay healthy. Because many STIs have no symptoms, it is recommended to get regular tests. Untreated STIs can cause pelvic pain that doesn't go away, or infertility (not being able to make a bub).

You should have an STI test sooner if:

- you have more than one sexual partner
- have recently changed partners
- you had sex without a condom or the condom broke
- you have symptoms such as itching, burning, pain or green/yellow discharge from your penis, anus (bottom) or vagina
- your partner has been told they have an STI
- you are using PrEP and you forgot to take it

You can have an STI test at any age, even if you are younger than 16.

All STIs can be treated

GET TESTED!

Where do you get an STI test?

You can get an STI test from:

- Your doctor or GP
- Aboriginal Medical Service
- Sexual Health Clinic
- Women's or Men's Health Centre
- Family Planning Australia
- Urgent Care Clinic

At Family Planning Australia, the appointment is free for people under 18, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, full time students and anyone with a Health Care Card.



Did you know?

STI tests are free with Medicare, but some clinics may charge money for the appointment. Make sure to ask how much it will cost when you book. STI testing is also free for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all NSW sexual health clinics.

How do you treat an STI?

All STIs can be treated. Many are treated with a type of medicine from a doctor called 'antibiotics'. It is important to avoid having sex while you are taking the treatment to stop spreading the infection to someone else.

If STIs are not treated, they can cause long-term health issues, so it is important to get tested so you can get treated. Common issues can include pain that won't go away or infertility (not being able to make a bub).

Did you know?

If found early, there is medicine that can slow the infection of HIV and delay or prevent the development of AIDS, as well as transferring HIV to others.

How do you tell other people you have an STI?

If your doctor or nurse tells you that you have tested positive for an STI, it's important to tell your current and past sexual partners so they can get tested and treated. If you don't feel comfortable telling them yourself, your doctor or nurse can help. You can also send an anonymous message through www.letthemknow.org.au. This way, nobody will know it's from you.

How can you prevent STIs?

STIs can be prevented in a number of ways. These include:

- using condoms or dams
- taking medication such as PrEP and PEP to help prevent HIV

Here are the steps to use a condom correctly:

Gain consent

1

Is this ok?

YES

Check the use by date on the condom

2



Open the condom carefully using the serrated (bumpy) edge

3



Pinch the tip of the condom



7

Once finished hold the base of the condom when removing the penis or sex toy from a partner



5

Roll the condom all the way down the penis or sex toy



6

Apply water-based lube to the outside of the condom if required. You are now ready to have sex – check the condom doesn't break



8

Put the waste in the bin



Did you know?

Using a condom correctly can prevent the spread of STIs as well as pregnancy. It is important to use a condom for vaginal, anal and oral (mouth) sex to prevent all types of STIs.

How can you prevent STIs?

Did you know that condoms can be used on a sex toy when using it with a partner to prevent STIs.

Remember, condoms need to be used for the entire time you have sexual activity to protect against STIs and pregnancy. This is because STIs and sperm can be spread in pre-cum (liquid that comes out of the penis before orgasm) and through some skin-to-skin touching.

If you think you have been exposed to HIV, contact your local sexual health clinic, hospital emergency department or the PEP NSW Hotline (1800 737 669) as soon as possible.

PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is a medication that can be taken before sex to prevent HIV infection. This can be useful if you are unsure if your partner has HIV, or if you know they have HIV.

PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) is a medication that can help prevent HIV infection if taken after sex with someone who has confirmed HIV or has a chance of having HIV. It is most likely to prevent HIV if taken less than 24 hours after sex. However it is still effective up to 72 hours later.

Feeling shame or embarrassed?

You might feel shame talking about your sexual health or getting an STI test. This is normal, but do not worry doctors and nurses do these tests all the time.

I would like to get tested.

Sure thing. No problem

Talk to your local health clinic, a trusted friend, Aunty, or Uncle for support.



Other places to find information

For Family Planning Australia clinics, information and resources:

www.fpnsw.org.au/Aboriginal

For more information on STIs, visit

www.fpnsw.org.au/health-information/individuals/stis
takeblaktion.playsafe.health.nsw.gov.au/

To speak to a nurse for free, call Talkline between 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday

Talkline: **1300 658 886**

www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline

To find your closest Aboriginal Medical Service and sexual health clinic, visit:

www.health.nsw.gov.au/sexualhealth/Pages/sexual-health-clinics.aspx

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