

Sexual Health Check

General

A sexual health check should be offered to:

- Asymptomatic sexually active men and women who:
 - Have **multiple sexual partners** OR
 - Have had a **recent change of sexual partner** OR
 - Are in the **age group at highest risk** for STI's; 15-25yr
 - Request a check

How to Initiate a Sexual Health Discussion

It may seem intrusive to offer STI testing to a patient who is having a general health check, or is attending for an unrelated issue. However, **if this is approached in the right manner most patients will not be offended**. It is important to frame the question in a way that does not make the patient feel that they have been singled out as being likely to have an STI, hence it is sensible to mention that the offer of testing is a routine one. It is also useful to make it clear that patients do not have to have a full examination if they do not wish to, as this will increase uptake of testing.

Some suggested questions:

- "As part of a general health check I ask my patients about their sexual health, and I offer testing for infection. Do you have any sexual health concerns that you would like to discuss?"
- I offer all my patients aged 25 and under the opportunity to have a test for chlamydia, which is a very common sexually transmitted disease. Would you be interested in testing?"
- Chlamydia is a very common STI, which often doesn't cause any symptoms. Testing can be done by a urine sample (or a swab that you take yourself) if you would prefer not to be examined. Would you be interested in testing?"

Sexual History

Basic sexual history questions:

- **Are you sexually active at present?**
- How many sexual partners have you had in the past 3 months?

About each sexual contact:

- **When was it?**
- Was your partner **male or female**?
- What types of sex did you have with your partner? (vaginal, oral, anal, fingering, sex toys, rimming)
- **Did you use a condom** for sex?
- **Have you had a sexually transmitted infection** before?

Other relevant history:

- Sex overseas or with person from high risk country
- Injecting drug use
- Same sex sexual activity
- Commercial sex work

Men

A routine check should ideally be performed when the patient has not passed urine for at least 2 hours (1 hour minimum), and consists of:

- Physical examination of the **genital and perianal skin, penis scrotum and testes**
- Urethral swab for **Neisseria gonorrhoeae culture** (pernasal swab inserted approximately 1 cm into the urethral canal and then placed in swab medium)
- First void urine (first 30ml stream) **for Chlamydia trachomatis** testing
- Serology as appropriate for **hepatitis B, syphilis, and HIV**
- **Men who have sex with men (MSM) should also be offered:**
 - Hepatitis A and B serology and vaccination if susceptible
 - Pharyngeal swab for Neisseria gonorrhoeae culture if practicing receptive oral sex
 - Anal swabs for Neisseria gonorrhoeae and Chlamydia trachomatis testing (swab inserted 4cm into anal canal) if practicing receptive anal sex

Women

- Physical examination of the **vulval and perianal skin, introitus, cervix and vagina**
- Endocervical swab for **Chlamydia trachomatis** testing
- Endocervical swab for **Neisseria gonorrhoeae culture** (Transwab)
- High vaginal Transwab for **bacterial vaginosis, candida, and Trichomonas vaginalis**
- Urethral swab for **Chlamydia trachomatis**
- Serology as appropriate for **hepatitis B, syphilis, and HIV**

Note: For women who decline a speculum examination a self collected vaginal swab may be used.