

Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI)

1. What is a Sexually Transmitted Infection?

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are very common, especially among people aged 15-24. You can get a STI from having vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who has a STI. People who get certain types of STIs may be more likely to get Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

2. What are the symptoms of STIs?

The most common STI symptom is nothing at all.

If symptoms do appear, they may include:

- **Discharge (drip or fluid).** Discharge from the penis may be white, yellow, or green. Discharge from the vagina may have a change in color or smell. Discharge from your rectum (butt) may also be a sign of a STI.
- **Sores, bumps, blisters, or rashes** on or near your penis, vagina, rectum, mouth, or throat.
- **Itching or burning** around your penis, vagina, or other areas. It may also burn when you pee.
- **Body rash.** Scabies can cause a rash all over the body. A body rash can also be a sign of syphilis or early HIV.
- **Pain** in the stomach or during sex, bleeding between periods, or swollen testicles.

3. How can I get tested?

Since most STIs don't have symptoms, the only way to know you have one is to get tested. To get tested for STIs, go to a doctor or health clinic. There are free or low cost, confidential testing sites available around Los Angeles County. Visit www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/dhsp/STDClinics.htm to find a local clinic. If you don't have a regular doctor, call the free STD hotline (800) 758-0880 to find free testing and treatment.

4. How are STIs treated?

Most STIs can be cured with medicine prescribed by your doctor. Some STIs have no cure, but treatment may be available. Make sure both you and your sex partner(s) are treated before having sex again. If a STI is left untreated, it can lead to serious health problems for you (and your baby, if you are pregnant).

5. How can I protect myself from getting a STI?

- Use a **condom** or **dental dam** every time you have sex.
- **Get tested** regularly in all the places (vagina, penis, rectum, throat) you have sex.
- **Talk to your partner(s)** about condoms and the last time they got tested.
- **Limit your sex partner(s).**
- **Talk to your doctor** and find out if pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a good option for you to prevent HIV infection.



Key Points

- STIs are very common.
- Most people who have an STI don't have symptoms. Getting tested is the only way to know.
- Most STIs can be cured with medicine prescribed by your doctor.
- If not treated, STIs can lead to serious health problems for you (and your baby, if you are pregnant).

For more information:

Los Angeles County
Department of Public
Health

www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/dhsp/InfoForYou.htm

California Department of
Public Health

www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/std.aspx

Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention
(CDC)

www.cdc.gov/std/healthcomm/fact_sheets.htm