

STI

Sexually Transmitted Infections



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de santé
publique du Canada

Canada

Our mission is to promote and protect the health of Canadians through leadership, partnership, innovation and action in public health. Public Health Agency of Canada

The Sexual Health and Sexually Transmitted Infections Section, Public Health Agency of Canada, wishes to acknowledge the Sexuality Education Resource Centre and its youth group, the S Team, for the development of this resource; Planned Parenthood Toronto whose website spiderbytes.ca was a source for content contained in this resource; and, the STI professionals and youth that reviewed this document prior to publication.

Aussi disponible en français sous le titre < ITS: les infections transmises sexuellement >

This document is available on the internet at: www.publichealth.gc.ca/sti

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, represented by the Minister of Health, 2007
Cat. HP40-13/2007E
ISBN 978-0-662-45530-1

SEXUAL ASSAULT

In Canada, some of the highest rates and increases in STIs are in young people ages 15 to 24. If you are having sex, or thinking about having sex, you need to know how to avoid sexually transmitted infections.

Realize Your Risk

Chlamydia.....6
Gonorrhea.....8
Trichomonas.....10
LGV12
Pubic Lice and Scabies.....14
Syphilis.....16
HPV.....18
Herpes.....20
Hepatitis B.....22
HIV.....24

Rate Your Risk

Kissing.....26
Touching.....26
Oral sex.....27
Vaginal sex.....27
Anal sex.....27

Reduce Your Risk

Choose not to have sex.....	29
If you choose to have sex, use a condom.....	30
– How to use a condom.....	31
If you choose to have sex, get tested.....	32
– When to go?.....	32
– What to expect?.....	33
– What should you know?.....	34
Websites to check out.....	38

Having sex to be cool, isn't cool.

Chlamydia

What is it?

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted infection. It is caused by bacteria. It is very common, especially among teenagers and young adults. Chlamydia can cause serious health problems. It has to be treated.

How do you get it?

You can get chlamydia if you have unprotected oral, vaginal or anal sex with a person who already has the infection. If you are pregnant you can pass it on to your baby when you are giving birth.

How can you tell if you have it?

You may have chlamydia and not have any signs or symptoms. You can pass it on without even knowing that you have it.

If you have chlamydia and you do have symptoms, you might notice:

Female

- a change or an increase in discharge from your vagina
- an itchy vagina
- a little bit of bleeding even when it is not time for your period
- bleeding during or after you have vaginal sex
- pain in your lower abdomen
- pain when you urinate

Male

- a burning feeling when you urinate
- a watery or milky discharge coming out of your penis
- burning or itching around the hole of your penis
- pain in your testicles

How do you get tested?

If you are female, a doctor or nurse will check for infection by taking a swab from the cervix (the opening to the uterus) or they may ask you for a urine sample. If you are male, the doctor or nurse will ask you for a urine sample or they may swab the urethra (the opening of the penis).

How is it treated?

It can be cured with antibiotics. It is important to tell your sexual partner(s) that you have chlamydia. They also need to be treated. You and your partner should not have sex until you have completed treatment and have been told the infection is gone. Even if you are treated for this infection, you can get it back if you have sex with someone who is infected or has not been treated.

STIs, including chlamydia,
often have no symptoms at all.

Gonorrhoea

What is it?

Gonorrhoea is a sexually transmitted infection. It is caused by bacteria. Gonorrhoea can cause serious health problems. It has to be treated. Gonorrhoea can infect the penis, rectum, throat, eyes or cervix. The cervix is the opening to the uterus. The rectum is the lower part of your intestines.

How do you get it?

You can get gonorrhoea if you have unprotected oral, vaginal or anal sex with a person who already has the infection. If you are pregnant you can pass it on to your baby when you are giving birth.

How can you tell if you have it?

You may have gonorrhoea and not have any signs or symptoms. You can pass it on without even knowing that you have it.

If you have gonorrhoea and you do have symptoms, you might notice:

Female

- a change or an increase in discharge from your vagina
- a little bit of bleeding even when it is not time for your period
- bleeding during or after you have vaginal sex
- pain in your lower abdomen
- pain when you urinate

Male

- a burning feeling when you urinate
- a thick greenish-yellow discharge coming out of your penis
- burning or itching around the hole of your penis
- pain in your testicles

How do you get tested?

If you are female, the doctor or nurse will check for infection by taking a swab of the cervix (the opening to the uterus) or they may ask you for a urine sample. If you are male, the doctor or nurse will ask you for a urine sample or they may swab the urethra (the opening of the penis).

How is it treated?

It can be cured with antibiotics. You should tell your sexual partner(s) that you have gonorrhea. They need to get treated too. A lot of people who have gonorrhea also have the STI called chlamydia. You and your partner(s) may need to be treated for chlamydia, too.

You and your partner should not have sex until you have completed treatment and have been told the infection is gone. Even if you are treated for this infection, you can get it back if you have sex with someone who is infected or has not been treated.

*Part of safer sex is talking with your partner.
If you can't talk about it,
you shouldn't do it.*

Trichomonas

What is it?

Trichomonas is a sexually transmitted infection. It is important to treat trichomonas because it can lead to serious health problems. It can cause an infection of the uterus and fallopian tubes known as pelvic inflammatory disease which can lead to infertility.

How do you get it?

You can get trichomonas if you have unprotected vaginal sex with a person who already has the infection. If you are pregnant trichomonas can cause your baby to be born early or weigh less than normal.

How can you tell if you have it?

You may have trichomonas and not have any signs or symptoms. You can pass it on without even knowing that you have it.

If you have trichomonas and you do have symptoms, you might notice:

Female

- strange discharge from your vagina
- an itchy vagina.
- pain during vaginal sex
- burning when you urinate

Male

- burning when you urinate
- slight discharge coming out of your penis
- burning or itching around the hole of your penis

How do you get tested?

If you are female, a doctor or nurse will check for infection by taking a swab from the vagina. If you are male, testing is not usually done.

How is it treated?

It can be cured with antibiotics. It is important to tell your sexual partner(s) that you have trichomonas. They also need to be treated.

You and your partner should not have sex until you have completed treatment and have been told the infection is gone. Even if you are treated for this infection, you can get it back if you have sex with someone who is infected or has not been treated.

Not all young people have sex.
If you're not sure, don't do it.

LGV

What is it?

LGV is short for lymphogranuloma venereum. It is a sexually transmitted infection that recently began showing up in Canada. It is caused by a certain type of chlamydia bacteria. LGV can cause serious health problems. It has to be treated.

How do you get it?

You can get LGV if you have unprotected oral, vaginal or anal sex with a person who already has the infection.

How can you tell if you have it?

A painless sore or lump may appear where the bacteria has entered the body. The sore or lump can be painless and often is inside you. It will clear up without treatment. You may not notice you have it. In the second stage you may develop flu-like symptoms, your lymph nodes may become swollen and there may be discharge from the genital and/or anal area. If left untreated, LGV can cause genital and/or anal scarring that may need surgery. In rare cases it can even cause death.

How do you get tested?

If you are female, a doctor or nurse may check for infection by taking a swab from the cervix (the opening to the uterus). If you are male, the doctor or nurse may swab the urethra (the opening of the penis) or take a urine test. Male or female, the doctor or nurse may also take a swab from your anus or throat. A blood test may also be needed.

How is it treated?

It can be cured with antibiotics. It is important to tell your sexual partner(s) that you have LGV. They also need to be treated.

You and your partner should not have sex until you have completed treatment and have been told the infection is gone. Even if you are treated for this infection, you can get it back if you have sex with someone who is infected or has not been treated.

If you're not comfortable talking about sex, you should think twice about having sex.

Pubic Lice & Scabies

What is it?

Pubic lice are also known as "crabs". They are usually found around the genitals in pubic hair. Lice look like tiny crabs. They are grey or brownish red. Lice live by feeding on human blood. They lay their eggs at the base of the hair. Their eggs are called nits.

Scabies are tiny mites that burrow below the surface of the skin and lay eggs. You can't see scabies but a rash and itching are common symptoms.

How do you get it?

Pubic lice and scabies are transmitted both by sexual and non-sexual contact. An example of non-sexual contact is sharing towels with an infected person. Pubic lice and scabies can live on objects such as towels, bedding and mattresses.

How can you tell if you have it?

If you have pubic lice or scabies the parts of your body that have been infected may feel itchy. For pubic lice, you might see tiny light brown insects or oval, whitish eggs on the hair. For scabies, itching occurs mainly at night and a rash may appear between your fingers, on your wrists, abdomen, ankles, on the bend of your elbows or around your genitals.

How do you get tested?

You can usually tell if you have pubic lice by finding the adult lice or eggs on the hair. If you are not sure if you have pubic lice or scabies, see a doctor or nurse.

How is it treated?

Pubic lice and scabies are treated with special creams, lotions or shampoos available at the drug store. Ask the pharmacist for help and then follow the directions carefully. Your partner(s), friends and family may also have lice or scabies and have to be treated too. Infants, females who are pregnant and females who are breast feeding need a different treatment. Speak with the pharmacist to make sure that you use a treatment that will not be harmful.

You will need to:

- dry clean or machine wash all of your clothing in hot water
- wash all bed linen in hot water
- store quilts and blankets for one week in closed plastic bags if you cannot wash them
- vacuum everything that has been in contact that you cannot wash (mattress, carpets, etc.)

Syphilis

What is it?

Syphilis is an infection caused by bacteria which are most often sexually transmitted. It can cause serious health problems. It has to be treated.

How do you get it?

You can get syphilis if you have unprotected oral, vaginal or anal sex with a person who already has the infection. Syphilis causes painless sores on the genitals or they can be hidden in the mouth, vagina or rectum. It can also cause a rash anywhere on the body. The infection is spread through contact with the sores or rashes. If you are pregnant and have syphilis, you can pass on the infection to your baby before it is born or during birth, sometimes causing birth defects or death.

How can you tell if you have it?

- In most cases the first symptom is a sore that doesn't hurt. It is called a chancre. You may not notice this sore. The sore goes away even if it is not treated but you still have the infection.
- Later you may get a body rash and feel like you have the flu. These symptoms will also go away even if they are not treated.
- If you don't treat the syphilis, you may get very sick. Untreated syphilis can lead to damage of the heart, the brain and other organs of the body and may even cause death.

How do you get tested?

You can get a special blood test.

How is it treated?

You should be treated for syphilis as soon as you find out that you have it. Syphilis can be cured with antibiotics, usually penicillin. You will need to get penicillin injections. It is important to finish your treatment. If you are allergic to penicillin, you will be given another antibiotic. You should tell your sexual partner(s) that you have syphilis and they need to be tested and treated too.

Once you have been treated for syphilis, you will need to go for blood tests to make sure that the medication worked and that you are cured of the infection. Your doctor or nurse will provide you with advice on how often you need to be tested and when you are no longer able to pass on the infection.

The criminal code of Canada states that having sex with a person who is passed out or too impaired to give voluntary consent is sexual assault.

HPV

What is it?

HPV is short for Human Papillomavirus. It is a virus that can cause warts or lead to cancer. There are many different types of HPV which can infect different parts of the body. The different types can affect your body in different ways. You can have more than one type at a time.

Genital warts may grow on your penis, scrotum and thighs or inside or outside the vagina or anus. HPV has been found to affect the cells of the cervix and potentially lead to cancer. It has also been found to contribute to other cancers, such as anal (both males and females), penile and vaginal.

How do you get it?

You can get HPV if you have oral, vaginal or anal sex with a person who already has the virus. You can also get HPV from other sexual activity with skin to skin contact. Your partner may not have visible warts but can still spread the virus. A lot of sexually active people have HPV or will have it over their lifetime.

How can you tell if you have it?

You can pass on the virus without even knowing you have it. If you find warts on your genitals, they may look like bumps which can be cauliflower like. Some warts are very hard to see. A doctor or nurse can do an exam to find them.

HPV Vaccine

If you are female, and between 9-26 years of age, you can protect yourself against some types of HPV with a vaccine. It is given by a needle in three doses.

The HPV vaccine does not protect against all types of HPV. Even if you are vaccinated it is still possible that you will become infected with other types of HPV. It is still very important for you to continue to have regular PAP tests and use condoms for vaginal, anal and oral sex.

The vaccine is not approved for guys, but they are studying this now.

How do you get tested?

A doctor or nurse can tell if you have genital warts by looking at them. Some types of HPV can cause changes to a female's cervix. In some people these changes may lead to cancer of the cervix. A doctor or nurse can do a PAP test to check your cervix. They will gently take some cells from your cervix. If you are having sex, or have had sex previously, it is important to have a PAP test once a year or until your doctor determines that the time period between PAPs can increase.

How is it treated?

Right now, there is no cure for HPV, but there are treatments for the things HPV causes – warts and changes in the cervix. Genital warts don't have to be taken off. If you want the warts taken off there are different ways a doctor or nurse can do this:

- put a liquid directly on the warts – it typically has to be done many times before the warts go away
- freeze the warts
- burn the warts
- remove the warts surgically
- even if they are treated there is a chance they can come back

If your PAP test shows that HPV has caused changes to your cervix, you may be sent to a special doctor for a further check up.

Herpes

What is it?

Herpes is an infection caused by the herpes simplex virus (HSV). There are two types of HSV, types 1 and 2. They can cause painful sores around the mouth which are called cold sores. They can also cause sores on the genitals. This is known as genital herpes.

How do you get it?

- You may get it by kissing someone who has a cold sore.
- You may get herpes in your genital area if you have oral sex with someone who has cold sores.
- You may also get herpes in your eyes, mouth and genitals by touching the sores.
- You can pass on the virus when you have sores on your mouth or genitals that are easy to see but you can also pass on the infection without having any sores.
- If you are pregnant, you can pass the virus to your baby during pregnancy or when you give birth. Tell your doctor if you have herpes. He/she can give you medication to reduce the risk of your baby getting herpes while you are pregnant.
- You may not know you have herpes, but you can pass it on.

How can you tell if you have it?

A large number of people infected with herpes will not have symptoms and therefore you may not know you have it. If you have herpes symptoms you will most likely feel itching or tingling on your skin and then develop painful blisters that turn into sores. It will heal by itself. When you first have an outbreak of herpes, you may also feel like you have the flu and symptoms may last several weeks.

Can it keep coming back?

Yes. The first outbreak of herpes is usually the worst. You may get more than one outbreak. These are called recurrences and they tend to be milder than the first outbreak. The reinfection might appear again because you:

- are tired or under stress
- are ill
- have a fever
- got too much sun
- have your period
- are pregnant

If you have herpes, you have to rest, eat well and exercise.

How do you get tested?

A doctor or nurse checks your sores. They may also swab your sores. In some places, the doctor may order a blood test to help in the diagnosis of herpes.

How is it treated?

It cannot be cured but it can be managed. There are medications that may help you prevent outbreaks or reduce the length of time that an outbreak lasts. The doctor may also prescribe a medication for pain if your outbreaks are severe.

What can you do if you have a herpes outbreak?

- Keep the area clean.
- Wear cotton underwear.
- Wear loose fitting clothes.
- After urinating, wash your genital area with cool water.
- If it hurts when you urinate, sit in a tub of warm water to urinate, or pour water over the area while you are urinating.
- Avoid "wiping" the area. Pat it dry to avoid spreading the infection.

How can you prevent passing on the virus?

- If you feel a burning or tingling sensation but have no sores, do not have sex. This is a sign that you may be developing an outbreak and even without sores, you can pass on the virus.
- Do not perform oral sex when you have a cold sore.
- You should not have sex if you have an outbreak of genital herpes. Wait until the sores are completely healed.
- Remember, you can pass on the herpes virus even when you don't have sores.

Hepatitis B

What is it?

Hepatitis B is a virus. It can cause a serious infection of the liver.

How do you get it?

You can get hepatitis B from an infected person through their blood, semen, vaginal fluid or saliva. The virus can be passed on through vaginal, oral or anal sex with a person who has the infection. Hepatitis B can also be passed on by sharing personal items, like toothbrushes and razors, or by sharing needles or tattoo equipment. A pregnant woman can pass hepatitis B on to her baby.

How do you tell if you have it?

You can have hepatitis B and not have any signs or symptoms. You can still pass the virus on without knowing it.

If you have hepatitis B, you might notice:

- you feel tired
- you have pain in your abdomen
- your urine or stool (poop) is a strange colour
- your skin is yellow
- you are not very hungry
- you feel like throwing up

How do you get tested?

You can get a special blood test.

Hepatitis B Vaccine

You can protect yourself against hepatitis B. There is a vaccine that protects you. It is given by needle. It takes three needles and several months before you are protected. If you are at risk for getting hepatitis B, you and your partner(s) should ask a doctor or a nurse for these needles.

How is it prevented and treated?

There is no cure for hepatitis B. If you have hepatitis B, you might need to change the way you eat and also stop drinking alcohol. Most people with hepatitis B do get better. When you are better, you do not pass the virus on to others.

Most people with hepatitis B fight the infection off within 6 months. During this time you can pass it on to others. Once the body fights off the infection you are protected from ever getting the virus again and cannot pass it on to others.

Some people cannot fight off the infection and will have it for life; they are called chronic carriers. Carriers of hepatitis B can transmit the virus to others all their life. Chronic hepatitis B can lead to severe liver damage and cancer of the liver.

If you have hepatitis B you should encourage your sexual partner(s) to get the hepatitis B vaccine and until your partners are protected (usually 6 months after getting the vaccine) condoms or latex barriers need to be used during sex.

HIV

What is it?

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). HIV attacks your body's immune system, leaving it unable to fight certain infections. People with healthy immune systems can fight these infections off; people with HIV may not be able to. When a person has HIV and becomes sick from one or more of these infections, they have AIDS. A person with HIV may not develop AIDS for many years.

How do you get it?

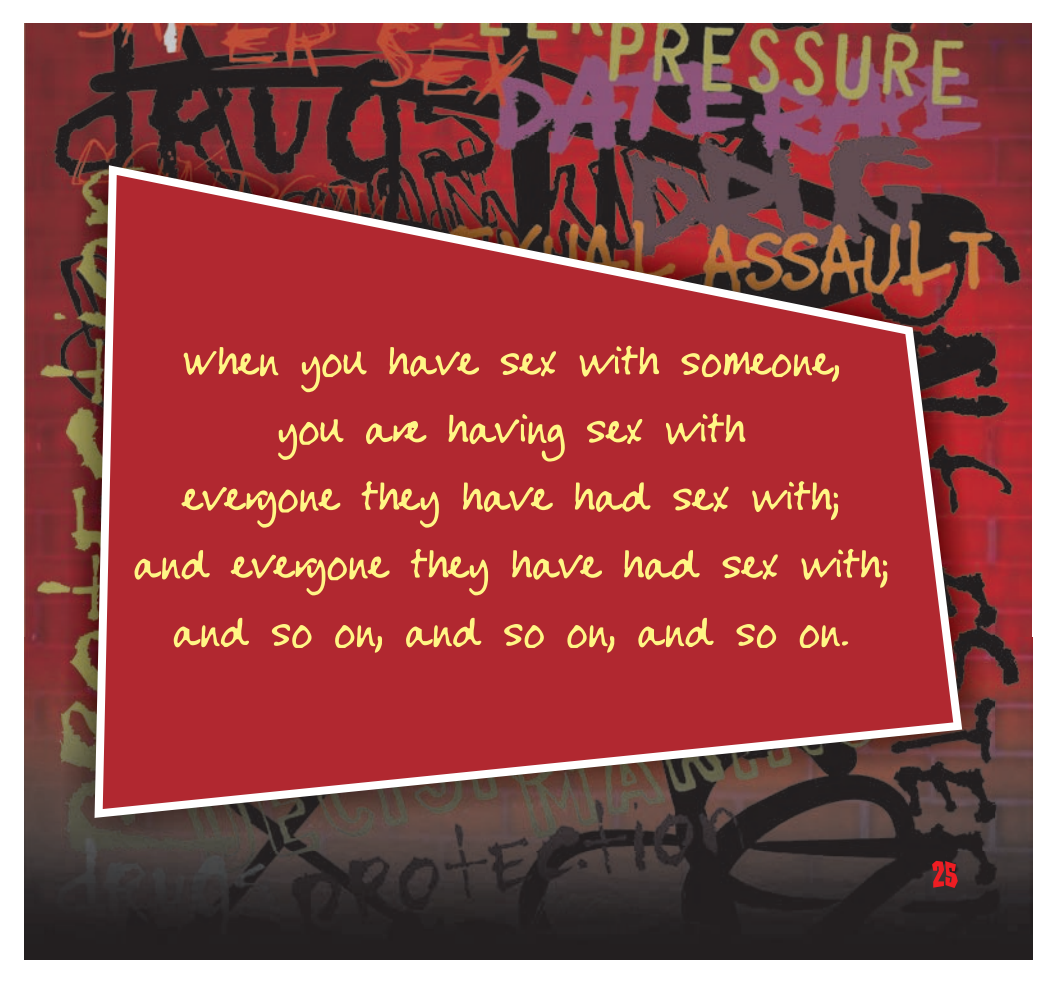
You can only get HIV by having the virus enter your bloodstream. The virus can be found in and transmitted through blood, vaginal fluids, semen and breast milk. You can get HIV by having unprotected sex (vaginal, anal or oral), by sharing needles or other drug use equipment (cookers, water, filters, etc.), razors or toothbrushes that have blood on them. If you are female, you can pass the virus on to your baby during pregnancy or while breast feeding. HIV CANNOT be passed through casual contact such as hugging, kissing, shaking hands, sharing food or toilet seats.

How do you get tested?

You can get a special blood test.

How can you tell if you have it?

You can have HIV and not know it because you may have no symptoms for many years. You may develop a mild flu, 2 – 4 weeks after becoming infected. If you had risky behavior as listed above you may want to get tested. It is important to wait for 12 weeks after your last risky behavior or the test may not be accurate. Remember, you could still pass on the virus to someone else without knowing you have it.



when you have sex with someone,
you are having sex with
everyone they have had sex with;
and everyone they have had sex with;
and so on, and so on, and so on.

Risk Rater

Kissing

Kissing exposes you to JUST A FEW STIs.

- Some STIs can live in saliva.
- Some STIs can be transmitted through cuts and sores in your mouth.

Safer Sex Options: skip it

Just A Few



Touching

Skin to skin touching exposes you to JUST A FEW STIs.

- Some STIs produce bumps, rashes or pus on the outside of the body.
- You may catch these STIs by touching that area and then touching yourself.

Safer Sex Options: condom, dental dam, female condom, gloves, skip it

Just A Few



Oral Sex

Giving Oral Sex exposes you to **MANY** STIs.

- Some STIs live in semen and vaginal fluids.
- Some STIs can be transmitted through cuts and sores in the genital area.

Getting Oral Sex exposes you to **MANY** STIs.

- Some STIs live in saliva and other body fluids.
- Some STIs can be transmitted through cuts and sores in the in your mouth.



Safer Sex Options: dental dam, condom, skip it

Vaginal Sex

Vaginal Sex exposes you to **ALL** STIs.

- One genital is inside the other.
- There is an exchange of body fluids like semen and vaginal fluids.



Safer Sex Options: condom, female condom, skip it

Anal Sex

Anal Sex exposes you to **ALL** STIs.

- One person's genitals enter the other person's body.
- There is an exchange of body fluids like semen.
- The skin inside the anus is very delicate and sensitive.



Safer Sex Options: use lots of lube to avoid any small tears of the skin, condom, skip it

Birth control protects
against pregnancy, not STIs.
Always use a condom even if
you are using birth control.

Choose Not to Have sex

You may not be ready for sex if:

You feel pressured.

Your partner isn't ready.

You're not sure about it.

You can't talk with your partner about it.

You need to get drunk or stoned to do it.

You don't have a way to protect yourself from STIs and pregnancy.

Your partner wants to get drunk or stoned to do it.

IF YOU CHOOSE TO HAVE SEX, USE A CONDOM

Use lubricated latex or polyurethane condoms.

Keep your condom in your purse or jacket pocket.

Store your condoms in a dry place away from heat or light.

Check the expiry date on the package or condom box.

Never use two condoms together.

Never use a condom more than once.

How To Use A Condom

Open Carefully

Rough tearing or long fingernails can damage the condom.

Place & Pinch

Put the condom at the end of the penis and pinch out the air in the tip.

Roll It On

Unroll the condom right down to the base of the penis.

Afterwards

Whoever is wearing the condom should pull out right after they cum and their penis is still hard. Remember to hold the base of the condom when pulling out so that it doesn't come off.

Throw the used condom into the garbage.

Never use a condom twice.

IF YOU CHOOSE TO HAVE SEX, GET TESTED

When to go?

- Before you have sex with a new partner.
- If you or your partner have been sexually active and have not been tested.
- If you know your current or past partner has an STI.
- If the condom breaks or you have sex without one.
- If you or your partner have shared needles for drugs, tattooing or piercing.
- If you or your partner have any STI symptoms.
- If you have been forced to have sex or think you might have been.

When you are sexually active, you need to be tested once a year, even if you haven't had sex for awhile.

What to Expect?

Male Exam

The doctor or nurse will ask you to undress from the waist down and will give you a drape to cover yourself. They will then do some or all of the following:

- examine the external parts of the genitals
- feel the testicles and penis
- take a swab from the throat, anus and/or urethra (just inside the opening at the tip of the penis)
- take a urine sample
- take a blood sample

Female Exam

The doctor or nurse will ask you to undress from the waist down and will give you a drape to cover yourself. They will then do some or all of the following:

- examine the external parts of the genitals
- put a speculum into the vagina to look inside the vagina and cervix
- take swabs from the throat, vagina, anus and/or cervix
- do a PAP test (they take samples from the cervix to check for cervical changes)
- do a bimanual exam (the doctor places one or two fingers inside the vagina and their other hand on the lower abdomen in order to feel the ovaries and uterus)
- take a urine sample
- take a blood sample

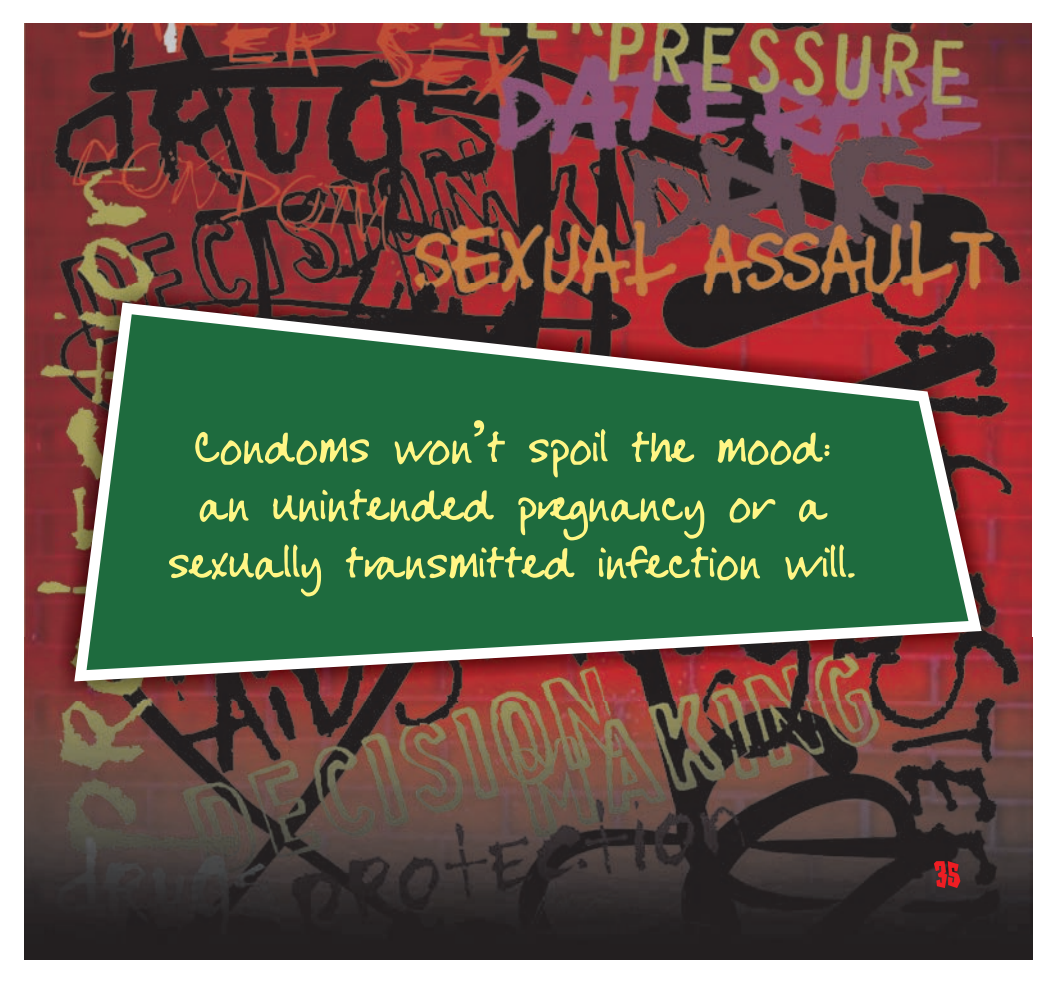
What Should You Know?

If you feel more comfortable with someone else in the room during your examination, whether you are male or female, you can make this request to the doctor or nurse. Most male doctors will now ask a female nurse to enter the room when they examine a female's genitals.


If you are concerned about keeping things confidential, tell your doctor. You can ask what they do with your medical information. If you don't trust the doctor, you can leave.

Doctors and nurses shouldn't tell anyone about your visit unless they:

- have your permission
- are making a referral that you have agreed to
- feel you are not able to understand medical advice or the consequences of your decisions
- suspect abuse and they are required to report to a child protection agency

The background is a vibrant red color, overlaid with various black and yellow graffiti-style words and phrases. The most prominent words include 'PRESSURE' in yellow at the top, 'SEXUAL ASSAULT' in yellow in the middle, and 'DECISION MAKING' in yellow at the bottom. Other visible words include 'TAUO', 'DATE', 'DRUG', 'CONDOMS', 'RAV', 'PROTECTION', and 'AV'. A green callout box with a white border is positioned in the lower-left quadrant, containing the text: 'Condoms won't spoil the mood: an unintended pregnancy or a sexually transmitted infection will.'

Condoms won't spoil the mood:
an unintended pregnancy or a
sexually transmitted infection will.



You don't have to have sex
to show someone you love them.



SEXUAL ASSAULT

You matter. Your choices matter.
You decide what's right for you.

Websites to Check Out

spiderbytes.ca
sexualityandu.ca

cfsh.ca

serc.mb.ca

publichealth.gc.ca/sti



PROTECTION

PEER

PRESSURE

DATING

SEXUAL ASSAULT

DECISION

SEXUAL ASSAULT

AIDS

DRUGS

HEALTH

CONSENT

RISK

SAFETY

POWER

CONTROL

CHOICE

AGENCY

RESPECT

BOUNDARIES

COMMUNICATION

TRUST

EMOTION

FEELINGS

WELL-BEING

MIND

BODY

SPIRIT

HEART

SOUL

MIND

BODY

SPIRIT

HEART

SOUL

Where to go for help

If you have questions, or want to be tested, you can go to a doctor or your local public health unit.

