

If You Think You Have an STD

Treating a sexually transmitted disease (STD) early limits the problems they can cause. If you have an STD, get treated right away. Ask your partner to be tested, too. Then avoid sex until you've finished treatment and your healthcare provider says it's OK to have sex again.



Follow your treatment plan

Treatment depends on the type of STD you have. Common treatments include injections and oral pills or liquids. Creams and gels can be applied to sores caused by certain STDs. Follow the tips below:

- Get new treatment for each new STD.
- Don't use old medicine, even for the same STD. Use medicines as directed.
- Don't share medicine unless instructed to do so by your healthcare provider or clinic.

Talk to your partner

If you have an STD, it's your duty to tell all your recent partners so they can be tested and treated. This is one important way to prevent the disease from being spread. Telling a partner that you have an STD can be hard. You may be embarrassed, angry, or afraid. It's often unclear who had the STD first. So try not to place blame. Your healthcare provider may offer some advice on how to begin.

Prevent future problems

Even after you've been treated, you can still be infected again. This is a common problem. It happens when a partner passes the STD back to you. To avoid this, your partner must be tested. He or she may also need treatment. After treatment, go to any scheduled follow-up visits. Then prevent future problems with safer sex. Limit your number of partners and always use a latex condom.

Diagnosing STDS

Your healthcare provider will take a health history and examine you. During your health history, you will be asked about your sex habits and health history. You may also be asked about drug use. Give honest answers. Your healthcare provider will then check your body for signs of STDs. He or she also may perform one or more of the following tests:

- Fluid is swabbed from any sores. Samples also may be taken from the vagina, penis, mouth, or rectum. The samples are then tested for STDs.
- Blood or urine samples may be taken. They are checked for viruses or bacteria that cause STDs.
- For women, cells from the cervix (where the vagina and uterus meet) are checked for signs of cancer. This is called a Pap smear. If cell changes are found, a magnifying scope may be used to take a closer look (colposcopy).