

STI screening

Anyone who has had unprotected sex (including a condom slip or break) is at risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection (STI). STI testing is recommended for all people having abortions because:

- STIs often have few or no symptoms, so testing might be the only way to find out if you are infected.
- Many STIs are easily treated, but if left untreated may become painful or cause long-term health problems.
- Some STIs increase the risk of getting an infection after an abortion.

STI Testing

We offer routine testing for Chlamydia, Gonorrhoea, Syphilis, Hepatitis B and HIV as part of your care. You won't be charged for these tests, even if you don't have a Medicare card (in most cases).

Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea are tested with a swab. Syphilis, Hepatitis B and HIV are tested with a blood test. If you're having a surgical abortion, all the tests can be done at the time of your procedure whilst you are under anaesthetic.

If you are having a medical abortion in a clinic, we will provide you with a swab in the clinic for you to take your own vaginal swab in the bathroom. We can also take the blood test while you are in the clinic.

If you have your medical abortion through telehealth, we will send you a pathology form to go to your local pathology provider. They will take a blood test and provide you with a swab to take your own vaginal swab.

You can still have an STI even if you've had a negative test result. STIs have a "window period" which means that if you've recently had

unprotected sex, you may need a further test in a few weeks.

Opting out of testing

We provide STI testing as a routine part of your care. If you choose not to have some or any of the above tests taken, please let us know during your consultation.

Getting your results

If you have a positive test result, we will contact you within 7 days by your preferred method of contact and discuss treatment options.

Getting treatment

If your Chlamydia test is positive, we will contact you within 7 days by your preferred method of contact. We can prescribe you antibiotic treatment or you can see your own doctor, if preferred. It is important for your sexual partner(s) to be treated and that you avoid all sexual contact for 7 days after treatment. Although the treatment for Chlamydia is very effective, it is recommended to have another test three months later to make sure you haven't been reinfected.

If any other tests are positive, you will need to be treated by a sexual health clinic or other health services. We can send you, and any health service you want us to, a copy of your test results.

Any sexual partners will also need to get medical treatment. They can be told by you or through an anonymous service such as:

- letthemknow.org.au
- bettertoknow.org.au.

Further information

- healthdirect.gov.au/sexually-transmitted-infections-sti
- healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services

Types of STIs

Chlamydia is the most common STI and can affect everyone, however it is most common in those under 30 years of age. It is caused by a bacteria which can infect the cervix (at the top of the vagina), fallopian tubes, urethra (where the urine comes out), rectum (anal passage) and occasionally the throat and eyes. It also infects the penis.

If untreated, Chlamydia can spread to the uterus (womb) causing pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). PID can lead to lasting pelvic pain, fertility problems and ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy outside the uterus).

Up to 9 in 10 people infected with Chlamydia have no symptoms, which is why it's important to get tested.

Chlamydia is treated with antibiotic tablets which we can prescribe for you. To avoid re-infection your partner must also be treated. They will need to see a doctor for testing and treatment.

Gonorrhoea is caused by a bacteria that can also infect the cervix, fallopian tubes, urethra, rectum and occasionally the throat and eyes. It also infects the penis.

If untreated, it can spread to the uterus causing pelvic inflammatory disease (PID).

Up to 8 in 10 people have no symptoms, but gonorrhoea of the penis almost always causes symptoms.

Gonorrhoea is treated with an antibiotic injection and tablets. You will need to go to a local doctor or sexual health clinic for further testing before treatment. To avoid re-infection your partner must also be treated. They will need to see a doctor for testing and treatment.

Syphilis is caused by a bacteria passed on during sex and by skin contact with someone who has a sore or rash caused by syphilis. It can also be passed from mother to child during pregnancy. There have been outbreaks of syphilis in recent years.

It can cause serious health problems if left untreated, such as damage to the heart, brain, bones, eyes and nervous system, however, it is easy to cure if found early.

1 in 2 people with syphilis don't have symptoms which can take weeks to months to develop.

If the blood test suggests infection with syphilis, you will usually need to go to sexual health clinic for further testing and treatment.

Syphilis is treated with antibiotic injections. Your partner will also need testing and treatment.

Hepatitis B is caused by a virus passed on when the blood or body fluids (semen, vaginal fluids) of a person with Hepatitis B enter your body or bloodstream, such as during sex or by sharing drug injecting equipment.

Most adults do not develop any symptoms at the time of infection and completely recover.

About 5% of adults who become infected with the Hepatitis B virus develop long-term (chronic) Hepatitis B infection. Chronic infection means the virus stays in the bloodstream for a person's entire life. A person with chronic Hepatitis B may 'carry' (and transmit) the virus for life without showing any signs or symptoms and may not know they have it. Chronic infection increases the risk of developing liver disease and cancer of the liver in later life.

If the blood test shows you have Hepatitis B, you will need to see a local doctor for further check-ups and treatment. You may need antiviral medications.

Immunisation is the best protection against Hepatitis B and is recommended for everyone.

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a viral infection that weakens the body's ability to fight illness.

HIV is most often passed on during unprotected sex or through sharing drug injecting equipment, or from a mother to child during childbirth and breastfeeding.

Although infection is uncommon, it is still important to be tested because the earlier a diagnosis is made, the better the outcome for those infected with HIV.

If the blood test shows you have HIV, you will need to see a specialist doctor or sexual health clinic for further check-ups and treatment. Your partner should also be tested.

Once someone is infected with HIV, the virus will remain in their body for the rest of their life. There is currently no cure for HIV, but Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) can help most people to live a normal life.



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