

# STI/BBV TESTING TOOL FOR ASYMPTOMATIC PEOPLE

## STEP 1

Offering routine sexually transmissible infection/blood borne virus (STI/BBV) testing helps people feel more comfortable and willing to discuss their sexual health.

### Examples of how routine STI/BBV testing can be offered:

#### Young people (15–29 years)

“STIs are very common among young people and they may not even know they have an STI. We encourage all sexually active young people to get tested regularly for STIs. Would you like a sexual health check up today?”

#### Reproductive health consultations

“While you’re here for contraception advice/cervical screening it’s a good time to talk about other areas of sexual health, like having a sexual health check-up...”

#### Travel consultations

“Some people take risks when they travel overseas and that includes having unprotected sex. If you like, we could do a sexual health check-up before you go and when you return.”

#### Hepatitis B vaccination

“Have you had a hepatitis B vaccination? It protects against an infection that can be sexually transmitted. Do you want to talk about this today?”

**Patient has symptoms of an STI?**  
[www.sti.guidelines.org.au](http://www.sti.guidelines.org.au)

### Sexual history

Ask these questions to identify potential risks and which tests to do:

*“I’d like to ask you some questions about your sexual activity so we can decide what tests to do.”*

- When did you last have sex?
- Do you have sex with men, women, or both?
- When you have sex, is it vaginal, oral and/or anal sex?
- When did you last change your sexual partner?
- Do you always use condoms?
- Have you ever injected drugs?
- Do you have any symptoms?

**STI/BBV Testing Tool for Asymptomatic People available at:**

[www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/sex-health](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/sex-health)

An abridged version of this tool is also available here.

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## STEP 2 STI/BBV testing – who to test and how often

Recommendations from the [Australian STI Management Guidelines<sup>1</sup>](#) (unless otherwise stated)

WHO Is the patient?	WHAT Infection?	HOW OFTEN Should you test?
<b>Young people</b> (15–29 years) Or <b>Asymptomatic people requesting STI/HIV testing</b>	<b>CHLAMYDIA</b>	Annually or more often according to sexual history
	<b>HEPATITIS B</b>	Confirm HBV immune status (history of prior vaccination or serology) and vaccinate if not immune <sup>2</sup>
<b>Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people</b>	<b>SYPHILIS</b>	Consider according to sexual history and local STI/BBV prevalence, or if patient requests testing for these STIs/BBVs
	<b>GONORRHOEA</b>	
	<b>HIV</b>	
	<b>CHLAMYDIA</b> <b>GONORRHOEA</b> <b>SYPHILIS</b>	Annually or more often according to sexual history or local STI prevalence. Regular testing for chlamydia, syphilis and HIV is recommended, as per the <a href="#">Standard Asymptomatic Check-up guideline<sup>1</sup></a> .
<b>Men who have sex with men (MSM)</b>	<b>HEPATITIS C</b> <b>HIV*</b> <b>TRICHOMONIASIS**</b>	A sexual history can be difficult to obtain in certain settings so consider offering BBV/STI testing liberally to this population. * Especially in the presence of other STIs ** For those from rural/regional/remote areas
	<b>HEPATITIS B</b>	Confirm HBV immune status (history of prior vaccination or serology) and vaccinate if not immune <sup>2</sup>
	<b>CHLAMYDIA</b> <b>GONORRHOEA</b>	At least annually, up to 4 times per year for MSM who fall into one or more of the following categories: <sup>3</sup>
<b>Sex workers</b> (see 'MSM' for male sex workers)	<b>SYPHILIS</b> <b>HIV</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have any unprotected anal sex</li> <li>Use recreational drugs during sex</li> <li>Have ≥10 sexual partners in the last 6 months</li> <li>Are HIV positive</li> <li>Participate in group sex</li> </ul>
	<b>HEPATITIS A</b>	Serological testing is not recommended before routine administration of hepatitis vaccine. Vaccinate as per recommendations in the Australian Immunisation Handbook. <sup>4</sup>
	<b>HEPATITIS B</b>	Confirm HBV immune status (history of prior vaccination or serology) and vaccinate if not immune. <sup>2</sup>
	<b>HEPATITIS C</b>	If HIV positive or have history of injecting drug use. If antibody positive, test for hepatitis C NAAT to determine if patient has chronic hepatitis C.
	<b>CHLAMYDIA</b> <b>GONORRHOEA</b> <b>SYPHILIS</b> <b>HIV</b>	Testing should be based on local STI prevalence, symptoms, diagnosed or suspected STI in contact and clinical findings. Frequency based on sexual history (private and professional life), if condom use is <100% (including history of condom breakages/slippages) or at patient request.
<b>People who inject drugs</b>	<b>HEPATITIS A</b>	Serological testing is not recommended before routine administration of hepatitis vaccine. Vaccinate as per recommendations in the Australian Immunisation Handbook. <sup>4</sup>
	<b>HEPATITIS B</b>	Confirm HBV immune status (history of prior vaccination or serology) and vaccinate if not immune. <sup>2</sup>
	<b>HIV</b> <b>HEPATITIS C</b>	According to sexual history and annually with an ongoing history of injecting drugs. If antibody positive, test for hepatitis C NAAT to determine if patient has chronic hepatitis C.
	<b>CHLAMYDIA</b> <b>GONORRHOEA</b> <b>SYPHILIS</b>	Annually or more often according to sexual history.
<b>Pregnant women</b> (ref: RACGP <sup>5</sup> and Australian Government Department of Health <sup>6</sup> )	<b>CHLAMYDIA</b>	Consider in pregnant women aged 15-29 years and those at higher risk.
	<b>HEPATITIS B</b> <b>HIV</b> <b>SYPHILIS</b>	All pregnant women should be screened using the HBsAg test. Vaccinate susceptible women who are at increased risk. Every pregnancy. All women should have a syphilis test in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy or at the first antenatal visit. Additional testing is recommended up to five times during pregnancy for certain at-risk populations and in areas affected by a syphilis outbreak. Please refer to the Queensland Syphilis in Pregnancy Guideline <sup>7</sup> and local area guidelines for current recommendations.

## STEP 2B How to test<sup>1</sup> – infection, specimen site and test type


INFECTION	SPECIMEN COLLECTION SITE	TEST
<b>♀ FEMALES</b>		
<b>CHLAMYDIA</b>	Vaginal swab* (preferred) OR Endocervical swab** (preferred) First catch urine* (at any time of the day) Rectal swab* (if patient has anal sex)	Chlamydia NAAT (PCR)
	Vaginal swab* (preferred) OR Endocervical swab** (preferred) First catch urine* (at any time of the day) Throat swab* (if patient has oral sex) Rectal swab* (if patient has anal sex)	Gonorrhoea NAAT (PCR) + culture if discharge present
<b>GONORRHOEA</b>	High vaginal swab** First catch urine* (at any time of the day)	Trichomoniasis NAAT (PCR)
<b>♂ MALES</b>		
<b>CHLAMYDIA</b>	First catch urine* (at any time of the day) Plus throat swab* (for MSM) Plus rectal swab* (for MSM)	Chlamydia NAAT (PCR)
	First catch urine* (at any time of the day) Plus throat swab* (for MSM) Plus rectal swab* (for MSM)	Gonorrhoea NAAT (PCR) + culture if discharge present
<b>GONORRHOEA</b>	First catch urine* (at any time of the day) Plus throat swab* (for MSM) Plus rectal swab* (for MSM)	Trichomoniasis NAAT (PCR)
<b>TRICHOMONIASIS</b>	First catch urine* (at any time of the day)	Trichomoniasis NAAT (PCR)
*consider self-collected **health provider-collected		
<b>♀♂ FEMALES AND MALES</b>		
<b>SYPHILIS</b>	Blood	Syphilis serology
<b>HIV</b>	Blood	HIV Ab/Ag
<b>HEPATITIS A</b>	Blood	Total HAV antibodies or anti HAV IgG if indicated <sup>4</sup>
<b>HEPATITIS B</b>	Blood	HBsAg
		anti-HBc antibody anti-HBs antibody
<b>HEPATITIS C</b>	Blood	HCV Ab
More information...	Query about positive syphilis serology? Call the Qld Syphilis Surveillance Service 1800 032 238	HIV, Hepatitis B & C Testing Portal <a href="http://www.testingportal.ashm.org.au">www.testingportal.ashm.org.au</a>

## STEP 3 Contact tracing/partner notification<sup>1,8</sup>

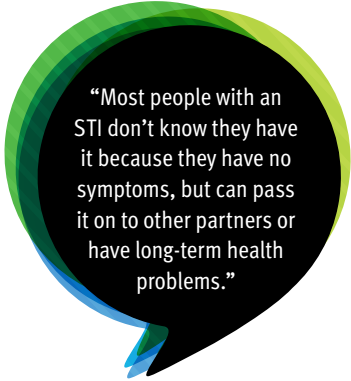
INFECTION	HOW FAR BACK TO TRACE
<b>CHLAMYDIA</b>	6 months
<b>GONORRHOEA</b>	2 months
<b>SYPHILIS</b>	Primary syphilis – 3 months plus duration of symptoms
	Secondary syphilis – 6 months plus duration of symptoms
	Early latent syphilis – 12 months
<b>HIV</b>	Start with recent sexual or injecting drug use needle-sharing partners Outer limit is onset of risk behaviour or last known HIV negative test result
	6 months prior to onset of acute symptoms. If asymptomatic, according to sexual history For newly acquired cases contact your local Public Health Unit (PHU) and/or specialist.
<b>HEPATITIS B</b>	Low risk for sexual exposure (except for HIV positive men) so contact tracing not generally performed for sexual partners. Contacts via parenteral exposure (shared needles, injecting equipment) should be tested if possible. Children of mothers who are hepatitis C positive should be tested. <i>Note: rarely sexually transmitted except in HIV co-infection</i>
<b>HEPATITIS C</b>	Unknown; important to treat all sexual partners.

## How to initiate partner notification:

### a) Introduce the reasons for partner notification




“It’s important your partner(s) get treated so you don’t get infected again.”



“Most people with an STI don’t know they have it because they have no symptoms, but can pass it on to other partners or have long-term health problems.”

### b) Help identify which partner(s) need to be informed

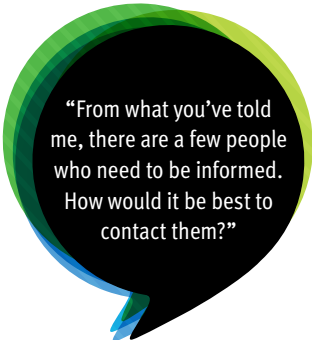
Use cues such as location or events; use a non-judgmental approach; some people have more than one sexual partner who may require treatment.



“Think back to when and where you had sex recently or any special events.”

### c) Explain partner notification methods and offer choice

Different methods may be needed for each contact e.g. in person, phone, SMS, email, social media, referral to a specialist contact tracing support service.



“From what you’ve told me, there are a few people who need to be informed. How would it be best to contact them?”

## Provider-initiated referral:

Means the diagnosing doctor, their delegate or another health agency obtains the consent of the patient and then informs the patient’s sexual partner(s). This can be performed anonymously or not (depending on the wishes of the patient). This is considered the best option for notifying partners about HIV infections or if there are any concerns around domestic violence.

## Patient-initiated referral:

Means your patient chooses to inform their own partner(s). Discuss with the patient how their partner(s) can be informed and then provide the patient with information to give to their partner(s).

### d) Support your patient to notify their partner(s)

Provide STI factsheets, offer partner notification websites and schedule a follow-up visit/phone call. Assistance could be provided to your patient to access partner notification websites during the consult, such as:

#### **www.letthemknow.org.au**

Information on STIs and advice for all patients. Online anonymous notification of contacts via SMS, email or letter.

#### **www.thedramadownunder.info**

Information on STIs and advice for MSM. Online anonymous notification of contacts via SMS or email.

#### **www.bettertoknow.org.au**

Information on STIs and advice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Online anonymous notification of contacts via SMS or email.

### e) Document discussions in patient notes

#### Need contact tracing support?

##### Contact Tracing Guidelines

[www.contacttracing.ashm.org.au](http://www.contacttracing.ashm.org.au)

##### Queensland STI contact tracing support officers

**Cairns Sexual Health** (07) 4226 4769  
(Cairns and Hinterland, Torres and Cape)

**Metro North Public Health Unit** (07) 3624 1111  
(Metro North)

**Princess Alexandra Sexual Health** (07) 3176 7587  
(Metro South, Darling Downs, West Moreton, South West, Gold Coast)

**Sunshine Coast Sexual Health** (07) 5470 5244  
(Sunshine Coast, Central Queensland, Central West, Wide Bay)

**Townsville Sexual Health** (07) 4433 9600  
(Townsville, North West, Mackay)

##### HIV contact tracing support

**Queensland HIV Public Health Team** (07) 3328 9797  
[HIV\\_PH\\_Team@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:HIV_PH_Team@health.qld.gov.au)

**Post-exposure Prophylaxis (PEP):** should be considered for recent contacts of HIV within 72 hours of exposure. Find out where to get PEP [here](#).

**HIV PreExposure Prophylaxis (PrEP):** is an HIV treatment medicine that can be given to HIV negative people to prevent an infection before someone is actually exposed. See the ASHM tool for PrEP decision making.

## References:

- 1 Australian Sexual Health Alliance (ASHA), *Australasian STI Management Guidelines*, <http://www.sti.guidelines.org.au>
- 2 ASHM National HBV Testing Policy, <http://testingportal.ashm.org.au/hbv>
- 3 STIGMA 2016, *Australian Sexually Transmitted Infection & HIV Testing Guidelines 2014*, [www.stipu.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/STIGMA\\_Testing\\_Guidelines\\_Final\\_v5.pdf](http://www.stipu.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/STIGMA_Testing_Guidelines_Final_v5.pdf)
- 4 NHMRC, *Australian Immunisation Handbook*, 10th Edition
- 5 Royal Australian College of General Practitioners 2016, *Guidelines for preventive activities in general practice*, 9th ed, East Melbourne, [www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/redbook/6-communicable-diseases/62-sexually-transmissible-infections](http://www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/redbook/6-communicable-diseases/62-sexually-transmissible-infections)
- 6 The Australian Government Department of Health 2018, *Clinical Practice Guidelines – Pregnancy Care*, [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/pregnancycareguidelines](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/pregnancycareguidelines)
- 7 Queensland Health 2018, *Queensland Clinical Guidelines, Syphilis in pregnancy*, [www.health.qld.gov.au/qcg](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/qcg)
- 8 ASHM 2016, *Australasian Contact Tracing Guidelines*, [www.contacttracing.ashm.org.au](http://www.contacttracing.ashm.org.au)