



Guide to STIs

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This package was created by Healthy U: Peer Health & Wellness at the University of Manitoba. We are a group of trained, non-judgmental, and confidential student health and wellness leaders on campus.

We provide outreach activities, workshops, and one-on-one support for our fellow students on a variety of health and well-being topics. Feel free to drop in to chat or pick up more information packages.

If you would like to request or attend one of our workshops or events, check out our website for details.



What are STIs?

STIs, or Sexually Transmitted Infections, are illnesses you can catch from sexual contact.

Some are spread through fluids, meaning you would catch it by exchanging body fluids (i.e. semen, vaginal fluid, or anal fluid). Others can be spread simply by making skin-to-skin contact, meaning you could catch it without having penetrative sex.



Can STIs be cured?

There are different types of STIs which are either caused by bacteria, parasites, or viruses. Ones caused by bacteria or parasites **can be cured**.

- Chlamydia
- Gonorrhea
- Syphilis
- Pubic Lice
- Trichonomiasis (trich)



curable

STIs caused by viruses **cannot be cured, but they can be treated**.

- Human Papilloma Virus (HPV, Genital Warts)
- Herpes
- HIV (which may lead to AIDS)
- Hepatitis A, B, or C



treatable



How to avoid STIs

Condoms & dental dams

A dental dam is a sheet of latex that can cover the labia or anus for oral sex. You can make one by cutting a condom down the middle & flattening it out. Lube can also help decrease your risk!

Regular testing

At least once per year and with each change in partner. Even if you feel fine!

Staying sober

Alcohol & drugs can lead to poor decisions, like unprotected sex.

Never share needles or syringes

HIV and Hepatitis C can also be spread through the blood. Never share or re-use needles. Make sure you get your tattoos or piercings from licensed shops.

Abstinence

Things like kissing, cuddling, mutual masturbation, and massages are much lower-risk ways of sharing affection.

Limited sexual partners

Having sex with multiple people does NOT mean you will get STI's, but having fewer partners does lower your risk (especially if they've been tested and are STI-free).

Communication

Has your partner been tested since their last partner? Are they okay with using condoms?

Immunization

Ask your doctor about shots to avoid Hepatitis A and B, and some strains of HPV!



How do I know if I have an STI?

Getting tested is the only way to know for sure, since many people who have STIs don't have any symptoms.

If you do have symptoms, you may experience any of the following:

- Rash, redness, blisters, or lumps
- Itching/irritation
- Burning or bleeding when you pee
- Swelling
- Pelvic pain
- Discharge that's different from your normal (may smell foul or have a different colour or texture)

Adapted from serc.mb.ca

What about UTI's?

Urinary tract infections (UTI's) are **not sexually transmitted, but are common after sex**. They happen much more often to women. They are caused by bacteria getting into the urethra and then traveling to the bladder. This can happen during sex, from toilet paper (always wipe front to back!), from wearing a damp swimsuit for a long time, or from a number of other things.

After sex, always pee as soon as you can. This flushes out bacteria that made its way into your urethra.

If you think you have a UTI, drink plenty of water and visit your family doctor. UTI's can present similarly to STIs, so make sure you get tested for both.

Signs of a UTI:

- Pain, burning, or bleeding when you pee
- Needing to pee often, even if it's just a little bit
- Not being able to pee at all, even if you feel like you need to
- Swelling
- Pelvic pain
- Feeling generally unwell



What happens if I have an STI?

If you test positive for STIs, your doctor will discuss treatment with you.

If you are given antibiotics, it is very important you **take the full course of medication**, even if you feel better earlier.

Make sure you avoid sex until your treatment is complete, or until your doctor says its safe. Remember that if you infect someone, they can infect you back - make sure you both finish treatment before you have further sexual contact.

You will have the option of either notifying your sexual partner(s) yourself, or having the clinic call for you - they won't use your name, they will just tell the person they need to get tested. Either way, your previous partners who may be at risk *must* be notified.



Where can I get tested for STIs?

On Campus

University Health Service (UHS)*

104 University Centre

204-474-8411

<http://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/health-wellness/university-health-service>



Off Campus

With your family doctor, walk-in clinic, or Access Centre

Nine Circles Community Health Centre

204-940-6000

ninecircles.ca

Klinic

204-784-4090

klinik.mb.ca

Women's Health Clinic

204-947-1517

womenshealthclinic.org



NorWest Co-op Community Health

204-940-2020

norwestcoop.ca

Mount Carmel Clinic

204-582-2311

mountcarmel.ca

Youville Community Health Resource Centre

204-255-4840

youville.ca/health-centre

Aboriginal Health & Wellness Centre

204-925-3700

ahwc.ca



*There are no in-person services at the University of Manitoba currently. Check the relevant websites for remote services and updates.