

Testing for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

Who Should Get Tested?

Anyone who is sexually active should think about testing for sexually transmitted infections. The CDC recommends that women test for chlamydia annually until age 26. They recommend that men who have sex with men test for STIs every 4 to 6 months. Anyone who has had unprotected oral, anal or vaginal sex should consider testing. New CDC guidelines recommend routine HIV testing.

What Tests Should I Do?

To determine what tests you need to do, complete the STI Wizard, online, at www.stdwizard.org. This questionnaire will help you decide what testing is best for you. **You want to be sure that you test the appropriate parts of your body. For some people this will include throat cultures or anal swabs.** If you want accurate information you need to do accurate testing. Another way to decide what testing is best for you is to consult with a nurse at the Student Health Center (Nurse Advice Line 831-459-2591) or a Health Educator at SHOP (Student Health Outreach Program, 831-459-3772. We can help you determine what testing is best for you and discuss how to reduce your risk of an STI.

Getting Tested for STIs: Order It Yourself or See a Clinician?

- If you have **no symptoms** to discuss with someone, you can order your own STI testing at our lab. Take the online questionnaire using the STI Wizard (www.stdwizard.org) to determine what testing you need. STI testing for students with *no symptoms* is available Monday through Friday from 9am –12n and 2pm-4:30pm, except Tuesdays, we open at 9:30am. Costs will vary depending on your insurance coverage and costs are posted so you can make a decision based on your own insurance. **You can go directly to our lab on the basement level of the Student Health Center, complete your paperwork, and get tested.** Results will come through the Health e-Messenger to your email. Any positive results will be given with a phone call to you.

Free and Anonymous oral HIV testing is available much of the year at SHOP. You get the results in 20 minutes. You can find out more about this by calling SHOP at 831-459-3772 or online at healthcenter.ucsc.edu/shop

- **If you have symptoms or more questions about STIs, make an appointment with a clinician.** In this visit we will test the appropriate parts of the body and discuss how you can practice safer sex. The cost of this visit (as well as the cost of testing) is based on your insurance coverage. For appointments, call 831-459-2500.

Any registered student at UCSC can have a visit with a triage nurse for free. Initial consultation/speaking with the Triage Nurse is free, once tests are ordered, there may be charges. The nurse can help you decide if you want to be seen here or help you figure out how to use your private insurance to get tested. Visits with the triage nurse are by walk-in or call 831-459-2591. Monday through Friday 9am to 4pm.

Test at the Right Time!

There is a delay between when a person is exposed to an infection and when testing for the infection is accurate. If you do testing too soon you will not get accurate information. On the back of this handout is a description of common STIs and when you can accurately test for them. **For the most part we recommend that you wait at least three weeks between a risky encounter and STI testing.** For many people it will be sensible to test at 3 weeks, 3 months and even 6 months. If you have questions about when to test after reading this handout, speak with a nurse or with a Health Educator at SHOP.

Want More Information?

For more information about STIs and how to practice safer sex you can visit at SHOP or go to the following sites:

<http://www.cdc.gov/std/>

<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/>

Sexually Transmitted Infections – Testing Considerations

Disease	Symptoms	Tests done and approximate cost (\$ less than \$10, \$\$ less than \$20)	Other important information ® = Reportable to Public Health Dept
Chlamydia	75% of women and 50% of men have no symptoms. Urinary burning, penile or vaginal discharge, bleeding after intercourse and pelvic pain in women with internal spread of genital infection. Pain and discharge can also occur in throat and rectum if direct contact.	Specimen from genitals or urine will be positive by 7 days after exposure. Throat and rectal exposure must be tested separately. \$	Common infection in young adults. Untreated or repeat infections in women may cause chronic infection and pain, infertility or tubal pregnancy; in men prostatitis or epididymitis. Condoms for prevention.®
Gonorrhea	Women rarely have symptoms early, but can have vaginal discharge, pelvic pain, fever after several weeks. Men usually have penile discharge and urinary pain within one week of exposure. Symptoms can also occur in throat and rectum if direct contact.	Same as above \$	Less prevalent than Chlamydia, and more likely to cause obvious symptoms. Long term complications are similar to above. Condoms for protection.®
HIV	Early symptoms of flu-like illness rarely noted. Late symptoms of immune system dysfunction with severe infections, fatigue, weight loss.	Testing for antibodies to the virus may be done by blood or mouth secretions. Test becomes positive 6 weeks to 6 months after exposure. \$	Testing important for early identification and treatment to prevent or slow progression, prevent infection of partners. Condoms for prevention. ®
Syphilis	Painless sore at point of infection 3-12 weeks after exposure may last weeks. A non-itchy rash may appear several months later. May have no symptoms until late stage with destruction of multiple organs including nervous system	When sore is present, special tests may identify infection. Blood testing positive 2-8 weeks after exposure. \$	Syphilis is on the rise, especially in men having sex with men (MSM). Unusual rashes or painless sore should prompt testing. ®
Hepatitis B	May have no symptoms or may experience nausea, jaundice (yellowing of skin or whites of eyes and dark urine). Most college students have been immunized.	Blood testing for the virus and antibodies to the virus. Those immunized will usually test positive to routine antibody testing. \$\$	Hepatitis B is spread by blood or sexual fluids. Sharing razors, toothbrushes, or IV drugs are also risks. Immunization is available. ®
Herpes (HSV)	Viral skin infection causing blisters and painful ulcers usually occurring around the mouth in HSV type I and on genitals in HSV type 2. Symptoms often recur. Can also carry this virus without symptoms. Once infected virus persists in body indefinitely, although frequency of outbreaks and risk of transmission decreases over time.	Cultures from acute sore. Blood tests for antibodies when diagnosis is unclear, patient is high risk, or results of testing will change behavior. \$\$	HSV I usually occurs around the mouth as cold sores (most people have had exposure to this). Can be spread by oral-genital contact. HSV-2 can be transmitted by someone who has never noticed sores, or when sores are not present. Medication can treat outbreaks and decrease transmission. Condoms somewhat helpful
Genital Warts/ HPV	Viral skin infection which may cause warts on the genitals, vagina or anus. Rarely occur in the throat. Some strains cause infection on the cervix which can be precancerous or cancerous if untreated. Virus can be carried without visible signs.	Visual exam by clinician. Pap smear in women for cervical HPV and precancerous changes. \$\$	Skin to skin transmission even without presence of warts. Topical treatment can decrease warts, but cannot cure the infection. Condoms somewhat helpful.
Molluscum Contagiosum	Viral skin infection spread by close contact. In young adults, the genital area is often infected, causing irritated bumps with depressed centers.	Visual exam by clinician. Treatment is chemical or physical removal of lesions.	Although not necessarily an STI, adults may spread this genitally by contact. May resolve spontaneously. Treatable.
Crabs and other parasites	Small bugs that live on hair follicles and cause itching and irritation. Can be spread by close contact or sharing clothes and bedding.	Visual exam may find egg sacs on hair shafts or sometimes adult lice.	Treatment is with over the counter products. Scrupulous cleaning of clothes and bedding and treatment of contacts to avoid reinfestation.

For More Information: The Student Health Center website healthcenter.ucsc.edu has more information and links to reliable sources of information on STIs such as www.ashastd.org and www.stdwizard.org