

Student Health Services

NEWSLETTER; ISSUE 4



APRIL 2019

KNOW YOUR STATUS

APRIL IS STD AWARENESS MONTH

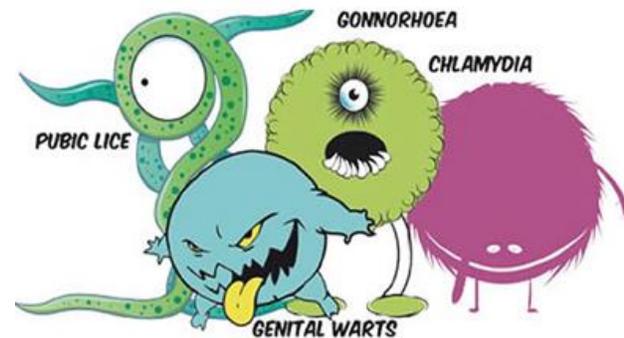
Getting yourself tested is critical to having a healthy sex life. For that reason, Health Services wants to empower Smitty's sexual health choices for the second month in a row! If you missed it, our March newsletter covered all things birth control. You can visit the Health Services webpage and check out all the past newsletters!

It can be confusing navigating the process of getting tested when it's not even clear how STI's and STD's can differ.

So what's actually the difference between the two?



STI's and STD's often mean the same thing, but the 'D' stands for 'disease', while the 'I' stands for 'infection'. Medically, infections are only called diseases when they cause symptoms, and **MANY STI's DON'T HAVE ANY SYMPTOMS**. The term STI is technically more accurate, but many people are more familiar with STD, so it's common to hear people use these terms even when there are no signs of disease. (Source: plannedparenthood.tumblr.com)



NURSE'S NOTE

Abigail Fontaine, RN; BSN

If you are sexually active, it is your responsibility to know your status!

No matter how few partners you have had, there is still a risk!

Gone are the days when not experiencing symptoms means you do not have an STI.

In fact most commonly transmitted STI's have no symptoms!!!

The process for STI screening in office is confidential and convenient; you do not need to leave campus.

Fulfill the responsibility you have to yourself and your partners; get tested for STI's!

Learn more about the Health Services STI Testing process below!

Nurse Office Hours:

7:30 am – 3:30 pm
Monday — Friday

Physician Hours:

9 am – 12 pm
Tuesday & Friday

WHY SHOULD YOU GET TESTED

EVEN IF YOU'VE HAD NO SYMPTOMS OF AN STD/STI

As stated before, STI's usually have no symptoms; but if you are, or have, been sexually active it is important to get tested. STD's can have mild symptoms that don't bother you, and some of the symptoms can be similar to UTI's, yeast infections and pimples. So getting tested is the only way to know for sure what is going on.

If you think you might have an STI or STD you should get tested, if left untreated they can cause serious health problems. It's also extremely important to be tested if you have had unprotected sex; or if you find out your partner has an STD or STI.



Health Services will test for Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, HIV, Hepatitis B and Syphilis.

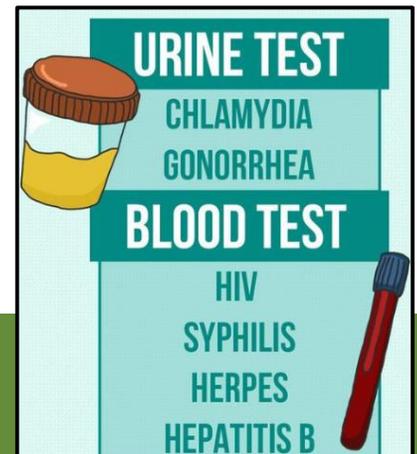
We do not do any sort of testing for Herpes in office.

Once you're done, feel empowered in the fact that you will now know your status! Getting tested is a regular part of being responsible and practicing self-care. So take care of yourself!

HOW DO I GET TESTED FOR STI'S?

HEALTH SERVICES HAS IT DOWN (START→FINISH) IN 7 STEPS

1. First, stop in to Health Services to make an appointment for testing. You'll have an opportunity to speak with Nurse Abby, and pick up a urine specimen cup.
2. On the morning of your appointment, for your first bathroom trip of that day, make sure to bring your specimen cup with you to collect your urine sample.
3. Before your first class, head to Health Services to drop off your sample.
4. Come back at your scheduled appointment time and have your blood samples drawn.
5. We will deliver your samples to the lab at Adirondack Health, and coordinate with them in the following day(s) to receive your results via fax.
6. The Provider is notified of the results and signs off on them. The Provider will determine if treatment is necessary.
7. Nurse Abby will be in contact with you once the Provider has signed off on your results to stop into the office where you'll receive your results, and any treatment that may be required.

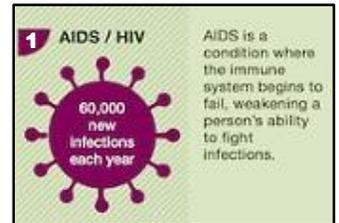


MOST STI'S/STD'S ARE TREATABLE

TREATMENT OPTIONS & THE RISKS OF NOT BEING TREATED

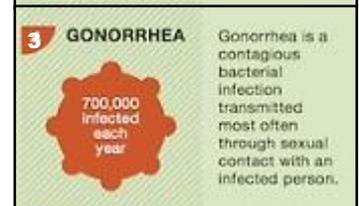
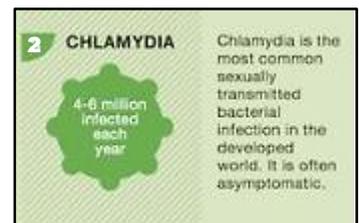
HIV

- ⌋ HIV has no cure, but there is antiretroviral treatment that can slow the progression of the disease and allow people to live long and healthy lives. Early diagnosis and treatment improves these chances.
- ⌋ HIV weakens the body's ability to fight disease; which can make an infected person vulnerable to infections they wouldn't otherwise get; and make more common infections worse.
- ⌋ Left untreated, HIV will develop into AIDS, which is a fatal disease.



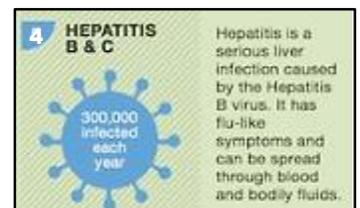
Chlamydia and Gonorrhea

- ⌋ Chlamydia and Gonorrhea can both be cured with the right antibiotics.
- ⌋ To prevent the spread of infection, all of your sex partners should be treated, and you should wait to have sex until treatment is complete.
- ⌋ There are some drug resistant strains of Gonorrhea, if your symptoms continue more than a few days after receiving treatment you should return to our office to be evaluated.
- ⌋ Chlamydia, if left untreated, can lead to in women, Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), which can lead to infertility, and ectopic pregnancy. Although it is rare, men may develop pain and swelling in the testicles.
- ⌋ Chlamydia also increases the chances of being infected with HIV, if a person is exposed.
- ⌋ Gonorrhea, if left untreated, increases the chance of getting another STD, including HIV. In women, it can also cause PID, infertility and ectopic pregnancies. Men may develop a painful condition called epididymitis which can lead to infertility.



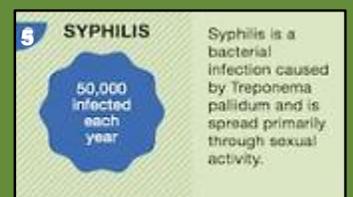
Hepatitis B (HBV)

- ⌋ Hepatitis B (HBV) cannot be cured, and is treated with rest, eating well, and lots of fluids. Chronic HBV can be treated through monitoring and antiretroviral medications.
- ⌋ HBV increases risk for infection of other STD's, including HIV.
- ⌋ HBV can cause chronic, persistent inflammation of the liver and later cirrhosis or cancer of the liver.
- ⌋ Babies born to infected women are likely to develop chronic HBV infections if they don't get needed immunizations at birth.



Syphilis

- ⌋ Syphilis can be cured by antibiotic treatment if it is caught early. People who test positive for syphilis should avoid sex with others until syphilis sores are healed. They should also notify all sex partners of their status so they may be tested and treated if necessary.
- ⌋ Left untreated Syphilis will remain in the body and cause damage to the brain, heart and nervous system; during pregnancy syphilis in women can harm or kill a developing fetus. It also increases susceptibility to other STD's, including HIV.



WHAT IF I'M POSITIVE WITH AN STD/STI?

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR PARTNER(S)

It can be awkward and overwhelming to tell your partner that you're positive for an STI/STD. But it's actually pretty common; 1 in 2 sexually active young people will get an STD by the age



of 25, and most won't even know it. You'd expect your partner to be honest with you, so it's important to do the same and tell your partner(s). Do it as soon as possible so they can be tested and treated (if positive).

Remember to not let the conversation turn into the blame game. It can be hard, if not impossible, to answer questions that pinpoint when or from who you received an STI/STD from; but try to have your partner understand that many people get infected without even knowing it.

With any recent sexual partner, they may also be infected but not have any symptoms. Urge them to also be tested, as they could re-infect you after you are treated. If you are in a non-monogamous relationship, make sure your partner is aware that they may be infected and could pass it to others without knowing.

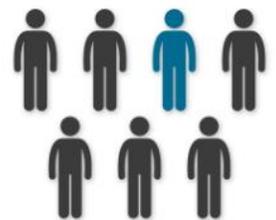
WHAT IF YOU HAVE AN INCURABLE STD?

IT'S IMPORTANT TO BE UPFRONT ABOUT IT WITH PARTNERS

First and foremost, an incurable STD does not mean the end of the world. People still live happy, healthy, relationship-filled lives despite their status. You may not be able to control how your partner(s) will react to the news, however, it is your responsibility to inform current and future partners about your STD.

Understand that if you had to take time to process your status; your partner might also need to do so. They may need time to consider if they are still interested in pursuing a sexual relationship. Remember that this is not a reflection on you, or your fault for disclosing the information. It is best to be as honest as possible and make sure you are prepared with correct information to answer any questions they may have.

1 in 7 living with HIV



are **unaware** of their infection.

It's important to note that there are still ways to practice safe sex with an incurable STD. Using condoms every time, dental dams during oral sex, and finger cots for internal stimulation are all ways to have a safe sex life. You and your partner can also explore opportunities to experience other forms of intimacy with one another, non-sexual and otherwise.

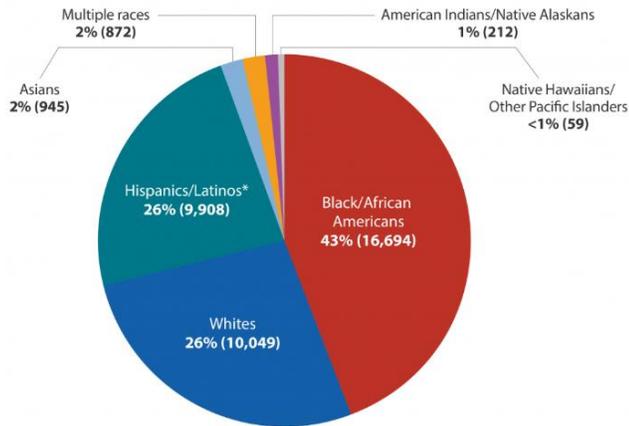
If you're the partner of someone with an incurable STD the most important thing is to not judge them, or base your decision to end or continue the relationship solely on their sexual health status. If you have already established a sexual relationship before learning your partner has an STD, the first thing you should do is get tested and develop a course of action from there.

ARE YOU AT A HIGH RISK FOR HIV?

PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) IS AN OPTION

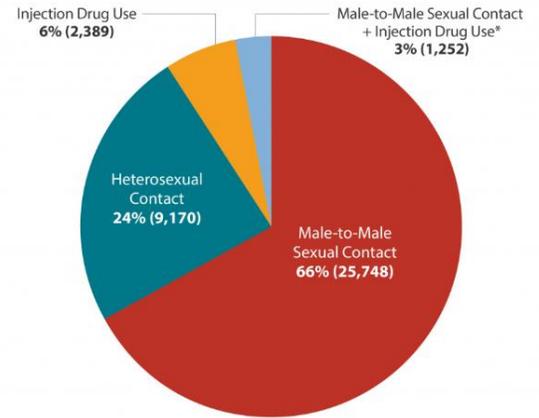
Who is at a high risk of HIV?

New HIV Diagnoses by Race/Ethnicity, 2017



* Hispanics/Latinos can be of any race.

New HIV Diagnoses in the United States and 6 Dependent Areas by Transmission Category, 2017



Includes infections attributed to male-to-male sexual contact and injection drug use (men who reported both risk factors).

Who might consider taking PrEP? There are pretty extensive guidelines for providers on who would benefit most from taking PrEP. It works best for the following folks:

- 🏠 Anyone who is regularly having sex with an HIV-positive partner.
- 🏠 Men who have unprotected sex with men, or have been diagnosed with an STI within the past six months.
- 🏠 Anyone who doesn't always use condoms when having sex with partners known to be at risk for HIV.

What do you need to know about PrEP?

- 🏠 The only medication approved for PrEP is Truvada.
- 🏠 PrEP does not prevent other STIs or pregnancy, so it should be used with condoms and other prevention methods for greater protection.
- 🏠 PrEP is only available by prescription from your health care provider. The cost of PrEP is covered by many health insurance plans.
- 🏠 PrEP must be taken as prescribed (daily) to be effective. You must be committed to taking the pill every day and seeing your healthcare provider every 3 months to follow up.



GYT PAUL SMITH'S

Get yourself talking. Get yourself tested.

To learn more about STI/HIV testing, HealthServices@paulsmiths.edu

WHAT IS PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis)

TREATMENT FOR POST EXPOSURE TO HIV

Whereas PrEP is a preventative measure to prevent the possible transmission of HIV, then PEP is the immediate action to stop the path of transmission. PEP means taking antiretroviral medicines after being potentially exposed to HIV to prevent becoming infected.

PEP should be used only in emergency situations and must be started within 72 hours after a recent possible exposure to HIV. People who would want to reach out to their doctor about starting PEP are:

- 📌 Someone who has been exposed to HIV during sex
- 📌 Someone who shares needles
- 📌 Someone who has been sexually assaulted

Prescribed PEP is not covered under insurance. If you have been prescribed PEP for a sexual assault then you can qualify for a partial or total reimbursement. It is not the right option for people who may be exposed to HIV frequently.

DID YOU KNOW 24/7 NURSE HOTLINES EXIST?

MOST INSURANCE COMPANIES HAVE ONE

This is an option you can and should use! Nurse hotlines give you 24/7 availability to a Nurse who can have discuss your symptoms, and your options for treatment. In the event of a medical emergency when Health Services is closed, you should contact Campus Safety at 518-327-6300. If it is not a medical emergency, maybe you just don't feel well, this is where it can be helpful to call your provided Nurse hotline. It might just save you a trip into Saranac Lake and help you avoid ER/urgent care bills.

To find out if your insurance company has a Nurse hotline (or something similar) check the back of your insurance card for a number to call. Or head to their website, you should be able to check if your specific plan has a Nurse hotline available to you!

For more information on STI's/STD's, talking to your partner, and getting tested visit any of our Sources!

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/>
<https://www.cdc.gov/std/>
<https://www.pinterest.com/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/>
<http://www.itsyoursexlife.com/>
<https://www.hiv.gov/>

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