

Last night I Picked UP someone... and something!

A guide to sexually
transmissible infections
for gay men



introduction

This booklet provides basic information on some of the most common Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs) found among gay men as well as information about STI testing, treatment and where to find more information. It is written for both HIV positive and HIV negative men.

This booklet should only be used as a guide. Not all STIs present with symptoms and even when symptoms do appear they aren't always the same. Some people may have no obvious symptoms, others mild symptoms and some more severe. If you think that you have an STI, get a check-up. If your doctor doesn't see many gay men or you don't want him/her to know you are gay, go to a sexual health centre (see back page for clinics and for contacts).

For more information, news and updates, check out our website www.whytest.org

contents page

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Golden Rules for Good Sexual Health | 4 |
| What are Sexually Transmissible Infections | 5 |
| Regular Testing | 6 |
| How Would I Know If I Had an STI ? | 9 |
| Reducing the Risk | 10 |
| HIV and STI Interactions | 12 |
| Viruses | 13 |
| Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) | 13 |
| Human Papilloma Virus HPV (Warts) | 16 |
| Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV) | 17 |
| Hepatitis A | 19 |
| Hepatitis B | 20 |
| Hepatitis C | 21 |
| Molluscum Contagiosum (MC) | 23 |
| Parasites | 24 |
| Pubic Lice (Crabs) | 25 |
| Scabies | 26 |
| Bacteria | 28 |
| Gonorrhoea | 28 |
| Chlamydia | 29 |
| Lymphogranuloma Venereum (LGV) | 30 |
| Syphilis | 33 |
| Gut Infections | 35 |
| Fungus | 36 |
| Thrush | 36 |
| Acknowledgements | 37 |
| Contacts | 38 |

GOLDEN RULES FOR GOOD SEXUAL HEALTH

Get tested regularly

The more sex partners you have the more often you should get tested. At least yearly if you have any casual partners and 3-6 monthly if you have a lot. This reduces the chances of having an undiagnosed STI that can harm your own health as well as increase your risk of picking up or passing on HIV.

Recognise and act on symptoms

If it stings when you piss, if you find a sore on your dick or arse or if you get a rash or itch don't just hope it will go away - get it checked out.

Tell your recent sex partners

If you've been diagnosed with an STI, or even just think you have one, let your recent sex partners know so they can get checked. This reduces the number of STIs in the community and reduces your chances of getting it again.

Get vaccinated for hepatitis A and B

There are vaccinations available for both hepatitis A and B which may be prescribed by a GP or possibly available for free from sexual health clinics.

Use condoms and water based lube

Condoms provide the most effective protection against the transmission of HIV and significantly reduce the risks of picking up a range of other STIs.

WHAT ARE SEXUALLY TRANSMISSIBLE INFECTIONS (STIs)

STIs are infections that are transmitted through close body contact or the exchange of body fluids such as semen (cum), blood, mucus or saliva. Sexual contact includes fucking, sucking, touching, fingering or kissing/licking a dick or arse.

For more information about how STIs are passed on and how to reduce the chances of picking one up, check out www.whytest.org and click on the "STIs & Sex" icon.

Different STIs are caused by different agents. These include:

Viruses: HIV; herpes simplex virus/HSV (herpes); human papilloma virus/HPV (genital warts) Hepatitis A, B and C; and molluscum contagiosum.

Parasites: crabs; and scabies.

Bacteria: chlamydia; LGV; gonorrhoea; and syphilis.

Fungi: thrush.



Regular Testing

If you or your partner have any sex with casual partners it is a good idea to get tested for STIs regularly. An annual check is a good baseline. However, the more sexual partners you have the more frequently you should get tested. That may mean every 3-6 months. Even if you have no symptoms you could still have an STI and the only way to know is to get a test.

If you are in a new relationship, monogamous or otherwise, it is a good time for you and your partner to get a check-up. You may have contracted an STI from a previous partner. Regular testing is also recommended if you are having sex outside the relationship.

What Does a Sexual Health Check-Up Involve?

When deciding on which tests to offer you, your doctor or health care worker will assess your risk by asking a series of questions about your sexual history. A full sexual health check-up should include all of the tests listed below.

If you don't have any symptoms a routine check-up should involve a:

- Blood test for HIV (you may need to ask specifically for this test),
- Blood test for syphilis and hepatitis A and B and, depending on your risk, for Hepatitis C;
- Urine sample for gonorrhoea and chlamydia;
- Anal swabs for gonorrhoea and chlamydia;
- Throat swab for gonorrhoea; and
- Physical examination for genital herpes, genital warts, pubic lice and scabies.

If you have symptoms you may be offered different tests.

If you're HIV positive

Getting regular blood tests to monitor your HIV viral load doesn't mean you are getting tests for other STIs. If you are sexually active you should ask your doctor to test for the full range of STIs whenever you get your HIV blood work done.

One-Minute Self Examination

You can also give yourself a quick examination for any external signs of STIs. Grab a small hand mirror. Find a private place, get naked and look for sores, blisters, rashes, itching, redness, swollen bits, unusual odour or wet discharge on or around your dick, arse and balls.

Some helpful hints include:

- Lift and look under the balls;
- If uncircumcised, pull back the foreskin;
- Look at the area between your butt hole and your balls (this is where the hand mirror becomes useful!);
- Check your pubic hair for small mites, eggs or lumps;
- Gently squeeze the penis along the shaft to check for any unusual discharge (it is common for most men to find some fluid when doing this, it does not necessarily mean that you have an STI).



Getting an HIV Test

Before you get tested for HIV your doctor or health care worker (HCW) should discuss the test and its meanings and implications with you. This is known as pre-test counselling. In this discussion, the HCW will gauge your understanding of HIV, how it is transmitted and how to protect yourself. The HCW should discuss the implications of a positive or negative result with you, including what support you have available after your result. You should find out about the “window period” and if you need to be re-tested. You should always be given the results of your HIV test in person. If you have questions or concerns raise them with the HCW if they haven’t been addressed during the discussion.



Get a Reminder

If you have trouble remembering when you had your last test and when you’re due for your next one you can sign up to the free www.whytest.org “**Remind Me**” service. Log on to www.whytest.org and enter your details and you will be sent a free SMS or e-mail reminding you to make an appointment for your next test.

HOW WOULD I KNOW IF I HAD AN STI ?

Many people with an STI do not have any symptoms. Getting an STI check-up regularly is the only way to detect most STIs.

Signs that may indicate that you have an STI include:

- Smelly, cloudy or yellowish discharge or pus coming from your penis or if it hurts when you piss;
- Blisters, sores, warts or lumps on your penis or any of the surrounding skin;
- Itchiness in the genital area;
- If it hurts when you have sex; and,
- Fever, swollen glands (especially in the groin), flu-like symptoms or unexplained weight loss or tiredness.

If you have any of these symptoms you should see your doctor or health care worker as soon as you can. You should also avoid having sex until you have been tested.

See page 38 or www.whytest.org for contact details for sexual health clinics and GPs.

Letting Previous Partners Know

If you are diagnosed with an STI, or even if you think you might have one, it is important to let your previous sexual partners know. By telling your partners you will be helping them to look after their health as well as reducing the number of STIs in the community. And that might mean you avoid getting the same STI again.

Notifying your partners is called 'Contact Tracing'. You can talk to your doctor, nurse or counsellor about contacting your partners or you can do it yourself if you feel comfortable.

You can use the www.whytest.org **"Tell Them"** feature to send an SMS or email to your past partners. You can choose to do this anonymously if you wish.

REDUCING THE RISK

Safe Sex

Safe sex, for HIV, is any sexual activity that doesn't allow infected semen, vaginal fluid or blood to pass from one person into the bloodstream of another person. Fucking without condoms, for example, can allow infected semen to enter the bloodstream of the receptive partner ("bottom" partner) through the lining of the arse. Condoms are the most effective way to prevent HIV transmission.

Condoms also offer some protection against a range of other STIs. They do this by preventing transfer of infected fluids or by covering infected sites. However, because STIs are transmitted in a variety of ways the protection condoms give is not complete.

Effective Condom Use

When used properly condoms stop the transmission of HIV and reduce the transmission of other STIs.

Condom Use Guidelines:

- Condoms come in different shapes and sizes (eg tighter fitting, regular, larger fitting, flared) - choose the best for you;
- Check the use by date and the Australian Standard mark;
- Take care not to tear the condom when opening the packet;
- If uncircumcised, pull back the foreskin;



- Squeeze the air out of the tip and roll the condom all the way down to the base of the dick;
- Use lots of lube;
- Check from time to time that the condom is still intact and apply more lube;
- When pulling out, hold the condom by the base so it doesn't slip off;
- Only use condoms once and, if having sex with multiple partners, use a new condom with each partner;
- Throw them in the bin not down the toilet.

Lube

Always use a water or silicone based lube. Oil based lubes (eg hand cream, Crisco, Vaseline) weaken condoms and can cause them to break. Using no lube or using saliva puts extra strain on the condom making it more likely to break.

Using plenty of lube is one way to prevent condom breakage – the more the better. You may need to re-apply lube several times when fucking.

Avoid putting lube on your dick before putting the condom on as it's more likely to slip off.

Sex Toys

To prevent STIs and HIV being transmitted from one partner to another on sex toys you can: have your own toys; wash them with warm soapy water and dry them between partners; or use condoms on them, changing the condom after use with each partner.

There is emerging evidence that hepatitis C is being passed on during group sex when infected blood is present on hands, toys or dicks that are inserted in one arse then another without being washed.

HIV AND STI INTERACTIONS

HIV Positive Men and STIs

If you are HIV positive there are some extra things you need to know about STIs. Some STIs may adversely affect HIV while HIV can make the treatment of some STIs more difficult.

Having another STI may lead to an increase in your viral load. Your last test indicates what your viral load was at that time, not what it might be now and it only tests the amount of virus in the blood not the semen. An 'undetectable' HIV viral load only means that your viral load is lower than the current tests can measure. 'Undetectable' does not mean that the virus has left your body, or that you can't pass on HIV during unprotected sex.

To reduce the impact of STIs on your health you can:

- Get tested regularly, at least every year and more frequently if you are having a lot of sex;
- Arrange for an STI test when you get your blood work done;
- Get vaccinated for hepatitis A and B; and
- Use condoms to reduce the chances of picking up STIs including gonorrhoea, chlamydia and syphilis.

Check out the individual STI Fact Sheets starting on page 13 to find out whether they have any specific impacts on HIV.

STIs and HIV Transmission

STIs have been shown to increase the likelihood of HIV being picked up or passed on.

If you're HIV negative, STIs can cause the skin or membranes in your urethra (the tube in your dick), rectum (arse) and throat to become sore, inflamed or bleed. This makes it easier for HIV to get in, increasing the chance of infection.

If you're HIV positive, STIs can increase the viral load in your blood, anal mucus, pre cum and cum, as well as in sores and lesions, increasing the chances of passing on HIV.

viruses



Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

Description

HIV is the Human Immunodeficiency Virus that causes failure of part of the immune system. The immune system is important because it defends the body from infection and disease. HIV infects and destroys key cells in the body. It particularly targets a cell called CD4 (also known as a T4 cell or T helper cell). CD4 cells are an essential component of the immune system which is important in protecting the body against infection and disease.

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) refers to a range of specific illnesses that people with HIV may get when their immune system is badly damaged. These illnesses include infections and cancers.

The presence of HIV in the body is not an AIDS diagnosis. It is possible for people to have HIV for many years but show no symptoms that define AIDS.

Transmission

HIV is only infectious in blood, cum (semen), pre-cum, vaginal fluids and breast milk. A person can only become infected with HIV if one of these body fluids containing HIV gets into their body and passes into their bloodstream. For gay men, the main ways in which this occurs is through unprotected sex (fucking or being fucked without

using condoms) or sharing injecting equipment. For HIV positive men the presence of other STIs increases the levels of HIV in semen and therefore increases the risk of HIV transmission. Similarly, HIV may be present in genital ulcers caused by other STIs at levels high enough for HIV transmission to occur. For HIV negative men having another STI can cause inflammation in the site of infection or ulcers, which increase the chances of picking up HIV.

Signs and Symptoms

HIV seroconversion is the term used to describe the process when someone goes from being HIV negative to HIV positive. This can happen between two weeks and three months after infection.

Some people show no signs of infection during this time. Others experience seroconversion illness which can include flu-like symptoms, fever, rashes, a sore throat and swollen glands.

Symptoms of ongoing HIV infection may include unexplained diarrhoea, weight loss, recurrent rashes, fever or an AIDS-related illness. AIDS-related illnesses include illnesses like pneumonia, brain infections, skin cancers, and severe fungal infections.

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) may develop between 1 and 20 years after infection. The average is about 12 years, with treatment usually extending this.

Testing

The test for HIV is an antibody blood test. Antibodies are the immune system's response to infection. It can take between 2 weeks and 3 months for the body to produce antibodies. So if an antibody test is done during this window period it is likely to show up negative.

There are other tests, called antigen tests, available that may provide a quicker diagnosis. These may be done with your initial test but consult your doctor or health care worker for more information.

Treatment

There is no vaccine or cure for HIV, but there are numerous HIV treatment options available. Treatment for HIV is currently provided by highly active anti-viral medications. These attack the virus at different points and stages in its lifecycle.

Prevention

When used correctly condoms are the most effective way to prevent HIV being picked up or passed on.

For HIV negative men, giving oral sex (that is, sucking a dick) is considered low risk. Having cuts or sores in your mouth, having an STI in your throat or having had recent dental work increases the risk. During these times, using a condom, avoiding cum in your mouth or avoiding oral sex will reduce the risk.

For HIV positive guys, having an STI in your dick will increase the chances of passing on HIV when receiving oral sex. Getting tested regularly and not cumming in your partner's mouth will reduce this risk.

Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)

If you think you may have been exposed to HIV you should consider getting PEP. PEP is a 4 week course of anti-HIV drugs which may prevent HIV infection, provided the treatment is started as soon as possible after the potential exposure.

To be most effective, PEP should be started as soon as possible after exposure to HIV. If it is not started within 72 hours (3 days) it is not likely to work.

To get PEP contact your local sexual health clinic, hospital emergency department or the 24 hour PEP hotline.

24 hour PEP hotline 1800 PEP NOW (1800 737 669).

HUMAN PAPILLOMA VIRUS HPV (warts)

Description

Human papilloma virus (HPV) is the virus that can cause warts on the dick, arse or surrounding areas. HPV is very common with more than 75% of sexually active people getting the infection usually between the ages of 18-25. Only about 10% of people who get HPV infection get warts. The rest usually don't know they have it.

Transmission

Warts are passed on by any skin to skin contact with an infected person.

Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms include small bumpy warts around the dick, balls and arse or discomfort when going to the toilet if the inside of the arse is infected but they can also be painless. There may be no symptoms at all.

If symptoms are present they will generally appear 2 to 3 months after being infected but it may take much longer. Outbreaks of warts can then occur periodically.

Test

A physical examination of the affected area can detect warts.

Treatment

There is currently no cure for genital or anal warts but a doctor, or health care worker, can remove the warts by freezing, burning, using laser or by applying liquid wart paints or creams. Warts can recur and treatment sometimes requires several visits.

If You're HIV Positive

Outbreaks of warts can be more severe and harder to treat in HIV positive men. Some types of genital wart virus have been linked to a greater risk of anal cancer. This risk might be even greater for people with HIV.

Prevention

Condoms can reduce the risk of transmission but do not always cover the infected area. The warts may be present on the balls or arse area.

A highly effective vaccine is available (although not free of charge) for young men aged 9-15. For this vaccine to be effective it needs to be given before exposure to the virus – which means before having sex. Talk to your doctor for further information.

Herpes simplex virus (HSV)



Description

There are two types of herpes simplex viruses:

- Type 1 is usually found around the mouth and is commonly known as a cold sore.
- Type 2 is usually found around the dick and arse areas and is commonly known as genital herpes.

Transmission

Herpes can be passed on both sexually and non-sexually during skin to skin contact, by direct contact with a sore on the mouth, dick or arse. It can also be transmitted when there are no obvious symptoms present.

Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms may not always be present but can include:

- Itching or tingling feeling around the infected area;
- An outbreak of painful blisters or sores which later form scabs; and
- Flu-like symptoms may be present.

If symptoms do appear they will generally show 2 – 30 days after exposure but they can take months to years to appear.

Testing

A physical examination of the affected area can detect a herpes outbreak.

Treatment

There is no cure but there are treatments that can reduce symptoms and speed up recovery. The possibility of repeated outbreaks varies from person to person, but outbreaks may become less frequent and over time may stop altogether.

If You're HIV Positive

Outbreaks of HSV can be more severe and last longer for those with HIV. HIV viral loads can peak during outbreaks, and increase transmission risk to partners of both HSV and HIV.

Prevention

Condoms can reduce the risk of transmission.

There is strong evidence that taking anti-HSV medications greatly reduces the chances of passing herpes to partners.

Hepatitis A

Description

Hepatitis means inflammation of the liver. Hepatitis A is a virus which causes inflammation of the liver.

Transmission

It is transmitted through small quantities of infected shit entering a person's mouth through activities like arse play, rimming, and by not washing your hands properly after sex with an infected person. It can also be passed on by using eating and drinking utensils previously used by an infected person. People are infectious for around three weeks, starting two weeks before they develop symptoms to about a week afterwards.

Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms can include a mild flu-like illness, vomiting, abdominal pain and jaundice.

When would Hepatitis A show up?

It will usually show up within 2 to 4 weeks.

Testing

Hepatitis A can be detected by a blood test.

Treatment

People with hepatitis A infection should avoid drugs, alcohol, excessively fatty diets, or anything that may affect the liver. If you suspect that you have hepatitis you should see your doctor, or health care worker.

If You're HIV Positive

While Hepatitis A will not seriously impact upon HIV it may lead to difficulties with compliance to antiretroviral medication if there is severe nausea and vomiting.

Prevention

People who get Hepatitis A will recover and develop permanent immunity to the virus.

An effective vaccination against Hepatitis A is available. A combination Hepatitis A and B vaccination is also available. Gamma Globulin can also be used to provide immediate protection against Hepatitis A for unimmunised people at high risk of infection. See your doctor, or health care worker, for more information.

Hepatitis B

Description

Hepatitis means inflammation of the liver. Hepatitis B is a virus which causes inflammation of the liver.

Transmission

It is transmitted by infected blood or cum entering a person's bloodstream through activities like unprotected fucking, sharing injecting equipment, toothbrushes or razors, oral sex, tattooing or body piercing with unsterile equipment.

Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms, which if they are present, will show up 1-6 months after exposure, may include loss of appetite, tiredness, nausea, yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice) and dark urine.

Testing

Hepatitis B can be detected by a blood test.

Treatment

Most people recover from Hepatitis B. Some retain the virus in their body – there are treatments available for these people. See your doctor.

If You're HIV Positive

Co-infection with both HIV and Hepatitis B may lead to more rapid progression of Hepatitis B to liver cancer. Treatment for Hepatitis B may also be less successful and limited by resistance to some antiviral medications that may already have been used for HIV treatment.

Prevention

There is an effective Hepatitis B vaccination. A combination Hepatitis A and B vaccination is also available. See your doctor.

Hepatitis C

A decorative graphic consisting of three overlapping circles in shades of grey and purple. Three stylized virus icons, each with a central circle and several smaller circles around it, are arranged horizontally across the middle of the circles. The text 'Hepatitis C' is written in yellow on a purple background bar that spans across the circles.

Description

Hepatitis means inflammation of the liver. Hepatitis C (HCV) is a virus that causes serious damage to the liver. For some people, this can lead to cirrhosis, or scarring of the liver and eventually liver failure and death after many years.

For more info on Hepatitis C go to www.hepatitisc.org.au.

Transmission

The virus is spread by blood to blood contact. Most Hepatitis C is transmitted by sharing injecting equipment or other blood contact. Strictly speaking Hepatitis C isn't considered an STI, however, there is increasing evidence that it is being passed on during sex – and especially during group sex. It can be transmitted when tiny amounts of blood are present on fingers, fists, toys or dicks which are moved from one arse to the next without being cleaned.

Signs and Symptoms

In the early stages of Hepatitis C, symptoms may be absent and they can take years after the initial infection to show up. If they are present symptoms may include fatigue, nausea, pain under the ribs, sweating and intolerance to fatty diets.

75% of people infected with Hepatitis C may carry the virus in their blood for life. 15% of these people may develop cirrhosis of the liver. A small number of people with cirrhosis may develop liver cancer or liver failure.

Testing

Hepatitis C can be detected by a blood test.

Treatment

Maintaining a healthy diet, reducing alcohol intake and cutting down on smoking can improve the body's ability to cope with Hepatitis C.

There are two approved treatments for Hepatitis C - Interferon and Ribavirin. See your doctor, or health care worker, for more information.

If You're HIV Positive

Around 1 in 10 HIV positive Australians also have Hepatitis C – but many are not aware of it. Co-infection with Hepatitis C is dangerous because it can accelerate the progress of both infections and make both more difficult to treat.

Prevention

People who inject drugs and share equipment are at a high risk of contacting Hepatitis C. If injecting, do not share any equipment, including spoons and tourniquets.

Wash hands, dicks, and toys and change condoms and gloves when moving from arse to arse during group sex.

Molluscum contagiosum (MC)

Description

Molluscum Contagiosum (MC) is a virus that causes pimple like lumps on the body.

Transmission

MC is transferred by direct skin to skin contact with someone who has the infection. It can be transmitted through sexual and non-sexual contact.

Signs and Symptoms

If symptoms are present they will usually appear within 2 to 7 weeks after contact with someone who has the virus.

Molluscum Contagiosum causes pimple like lumps that are waxy, firm and painless with a dimple in the middle. They can appear in the genital area as well as on other parts of the body.

Testing

It is detected by careful examination of the skin.

If You're HIV Positive

MC is difficult to treat if your immune system is suppressed. However, if you are on effective HIV treatments MC is unlikely to cause any real problems.

Treatment

Molluscum Contagiosum is easily treated by freezing the lumps off the body. Alternatively, the core of the lump, which contains the virus can be extracted with a fine needle. The virus stays in the skin for life.

Prevention

There are no specific means to prevent you picking up MC, however, getting treated quickly will reduce the chances of passing it on and will reduce the amount of MC in the community.



Parasites



PUBIC Lice (CRABS)

Description

Crabs or Pubic Lice are small parasites that grip onto the hair in the genital area.

Transmission

They are most commonly passed on by close body contact with someone who has crabs.

As crabs can survive for some time away from the body, it is also possible to catch them by sharing towels, clothes or someone's bed.

Signs and Symptoms

The most common symptom of pubic lice is itching in the pubic hair. Close inspection should reveal tiny lice clinging to the pubic hair. There may also be nits (eggs) attached to the hair shaft. Crabs can also be found in beards, armpits, on chest hair and on the eyelashes.

They usually show up from three days to several weeks

Testing

An external physical examination will show the presence of crabs.

Treatment

Crabs are easily cured by using appropriate genital lice shampoos and creams available at pharmacies. Shaving the pubic area will not get rid of the crabs. All bed linen, clothes, towels and underwear that has come into contact with the infected area should be washed in a hot, soapy wash. Sexual partners and anyone in close physical contact should also be treated to avoid reinfection. It is also advisable to repeat the treatment after seven days.

If You're HIV Positive

None.

Prevention

There are no specific means to prevent you picking up crabs, however, getting treated quickly will reduce the chances of passing it on and will reduce the amount of crabs in the community.

scabies



Description

Scabies are tiny mites (smaller than crabs) that burrow under the skin to lay eggs.

Transmission

Scabies are passed on through skin to skin contact, both sexual and non sexual.

Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms are usually noticed within four weeks.

The most common symptom is intense itching which is caused when the mites burrow under the skin. The burrowing causes fine red marks on the skin. The mites like warm areas of skin like the groin and armpits. They are also commonly found in the spaces between the fingers and toes. Itching is usually worse while warm, like in bed.

Testing

Scabies are detected by examining itchy areas under a bright light.

Treatment

Scabies are cured by using the appropriate scabies lotions available at pharmacies. All bed linen, clothes, towels and underwear that has come into contact with the infected area should be washed in a hot, soapy wash. Sexual partners and anyone in close physical contact should also be treated to avoid reinfection. It is also advisable to repeat the treatment after seven to ten days.

If You're HIV Positive

Severe immunosuppression can lead to difficulty eradicating scabies but otherwise people with HIV are not affected differently to others.

Prevention

There are no specific means to prevent you picking up scabies, however, getting treated quickly will reduce the chances of passing it on and will reduce the amount of scabies in the community.

Bacteria



GONORRHOEA

Description

Gonorrhoea is a bacterial infection that lives in the mucus lining of the dick, arse, throat or eyes.

Transmission

It can be transmitted through giving or receiving oral sex, anal sex and arse play such as fingering or fisting. Touching an infected person's dick or arse and then touching your own dick, arse or eyes can also transmit gonorrhoea.

Signs and Symptoms

If symptoms are present they will usually develop within 2 to 10 days.

Many people who have gonorrhoea will show no symptoms, particularly if they have it in the throat or the arse.

If the infection is in the arse, the symptoms may include a discharge or pain during bowel movements.

If it is in the dick, there may be a clear or yellow discharge from the dick and there may be stinging or pain when pissing.

Testing

Gonorrhoea can be detected by a urethral swab or urine test as well as swabs collected from the arse or throat. It is preferable not to piss for at least one hour prior to having a urine test.

Treatment

Gonorrhoea is easily cured with antibiotics. Sexual contact should be avoided for at least one week to ensure the infection has cleared after treatment.

If You're HIV Positive

If diagnosed early, gonorrhoea is easily treatable but if left untreated it can increase the risk of HIV being passed-on.

Prevention

Using condoms is not completely safe for gonorrhoea but provides the best protection. Washing your hands with soap and water immediately after sex can also help prevent transmission, especially if having sex with multiple partners.

Chlamydia

Description

Chlamydia is a bacterial infection that can infect the mucus lining of the dick, arse or eyes.

Transmission

Chlamydia is easily transmitted by anal sex, oral sex or arse play such as rimming or fingering. Touching an infected area and then touching your own dick or arse can pass on the infection.

Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms may appear between 7 and 21 days after infection but can be mild or in some cases absent. Symptoms can include a discharge from the penis, pain when urinating or pain during sex. If not treated, chlamydia may decrease fertility.

Testing

Chlamydia can be detected by a swab collected from the anus or by a urine sample. It is preferable not to piss for a minimum of one hour prior to having this test.

Treatment

Chlamydia is easily cured with antibiotics.

If You're HIV Positive

If diagnosed early, chlamydia is easily treatable but if left untreated it can also increase the risk of HIV being passed-on.

Prevention

Using condoms is not completely safe for Chlamydia but provides the best protection. Washing your hands with soap and water immediately after sex can also help prevent transmission, especially if having sex with multiple partners.

LYMPHOGRANULOMA VENEREUM (LGV)

Description

Lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV) is a particularly virulent form of the chlamydia bacteria. It is relatively rare in NSW but the first few cases have recently been confirmed.

Transmission

LGV gets into the body through the mucus lining of the mouth, penis or inside of the rectum. Anal sex without condoms is the easiest way this happens but using dildos in more than one man's rectum without condoms or cleaning can also spread LGV.

Signs and Symptoms

Not everyone with LGV has symptoms. LGV infection can have three stages with different symptoms:

- **STAGE 1:** Three days to three weeks after infection there may be a small, painless sore on the dick, mouth or arse at the site of the original contact. If infection is in the dick there may be pain when urinating or a discharge.
- **STAGE 2:** 10-30 days later (or even longer) glands may become painfully swollen. Different symptoms relate to different sites of infection:
 - In the rectum** - Painful inflammation (called 'proctitis') with blood or pus coming from the area. Shitting may be painful, constipation or painful abscesses/ulcers in the rectum may develop.
 - In the penis** – Discharge and swelling of the glands - so much that they might push through the skin and leak fluid.
 - In the mouth** – swelling of the glands in the neck and armpits.
- **STAGE 3:** Over time the bacteria will cause inflammation, scarring and tissue damage that can have disastrous effects on the area around the genitals and inside the anus. Haemorrhoid-like growths can develop in the anus and tissue damage can narrow the rectum. The genitals can swell dramatically.

Testing

LGV will show up as chlamydia in a penile or arse swab. However, because throat swabs for chlamydia are not standard it may be missed in the throat. If a test shows positive for chlamydia further

tests will need to be done to confirm LGV.

Treatment

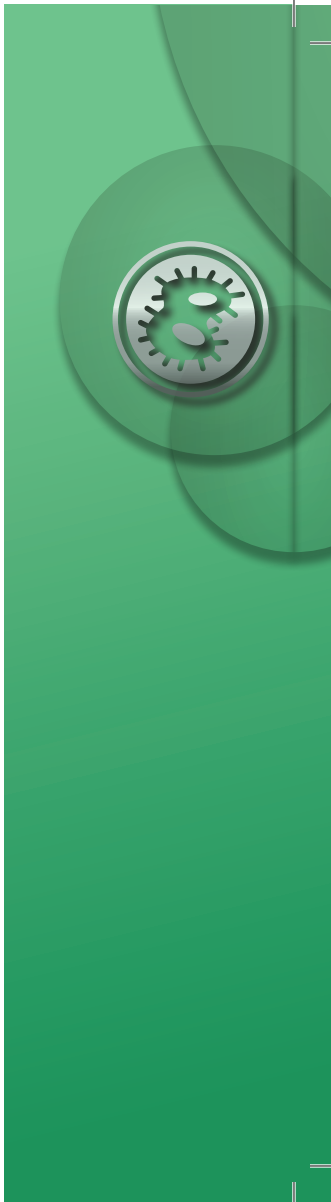
If treated before it gets to the third stage, LGV is quickly cured with antibiotics and leaves no lasting damage.

If You're HIV Positive

Having LGV makes it easier to pass on HIV because of the bleeding and skin damage LGV causes. It also puts you at higher risk of other STIs like syphilis and possibly Hepatitis C.

Prevention

Condoms reduce the chances of getting LGV, as does using latex gloves during fisting. When more than two men are having sex a new condom or glove should be used with each man to prevent infection being passed from one to another. Dildos and other sex toys should not be shared or should be covered with a condom that is changed with every new person they are used on or washed between partners. Washing your hands with soap and water immediately after sex can help prevent infection.



SYPHILIS

Description

Syphilis is a bacterial infection that infects the dick, throat or arse and then spreads to different parts of the body through the bloodstream. If left untreated syphilis can cause damage to the nerves, bones, skin, eyes, and brain.

Transmission

Syphilis is usually caught by touching sores and rashes of someone with the infection during sex including giving or receiving anal or oral sex, or arse play. Someone can pass on syphilis for up to two years after they become infected – even if they have no symptoms. When there are no symptoms, the infection can be passed on through contact with infected body fluids, like cum.

Signs and Symptoms

Some people never develop symptoms and in others it's easy for the early symptoms to go unnoticed. Syphilis has infectious and non-infectious stages

Infectious Stage

Syphilis can produce a painless sore on the dick, in the arse or in the mouth 10-90 days after infection. The sore usually turns into a scab and heals after two to six weeks but the infection remains. Only areas covered by condoms, gloves or dams are protected from infection.

Seven to ten weeks after infection some people then develop a rash on the torso (body), hands or feet. Symptoms may also include fever, swollen lymph glands, sore throat, patchy hair loss, headaches, muscle aches and tiredness. The symptoms may last up to a few months and then disappear.

Non-infectious Syphilis

If left untreated, syphilis remains in the body. It stops being infectious to sexual partners after about 2 years. During the non-infectious

stage syphilis may begin to damage the body's internal organs, which may include the brain, nerves, eyes, heart, liver, bones, joints and blood vessels. In some people this internal damage may not show up for years. Damage to internal organs can occur after 10 to 25 years and may be serious enough to cause death.

What is the test for syphilis?

If a sore (called a chancre) is present a swab can be taken of it. However, the usual test for syphilis is a blood test. It can take up to three months after exposure for the infection to show up in the blood test. Once someone has been infected with syphilis most future blood tests will show up as positive – even if they have been successfully treated. A particular test is used to identify a new infection – as well as to see if treatment has worked.

Treatment

Syphilis is treated with injections of antibiotics. The duration of treatment depends on the stage of infection and ranges from between 1 and 30 days. Treatment is often provided if you have had contact with someone who has had syphilis to prevent it developing in you.

If You're HIV Positive

Syphilis is harder to detect and harder to treat in people with HIV. It is a serious infection that can be mistaken for other infections found in people with HIV. While the symptoms of syphilis infection are usually similar, some HIV positive men develop severe organ and nerve damage much more rapidly than HIV negative men. For some, syphilis can decrease the CD4 count (therefore causing damage to the immune system) as well as increase the viral load.

Having syphilis increases the risks of HIV transmission.

Prevention

Avoid contact with any sores or rashes. Safe sex, for HIV, is not completely safe for syphilis but provides the best protection.

Gut Infections

Description

Gut infections are caused by bacteria (such as amoebiasis, Shigellosis, giardiasis and salmonellosis).

Transmission

Gut infections can be passed on sexually or otherwise through food and water. Transmission can occur when small amounts of infected shit get into the mouth from fingers, rimming, fucking, scat, or handling used dildos.

Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms can include diarrhoea, stomach cramps, farting, nausea and fever. These can show up within several hours of exposure.

Treatment

Anti-diarrhoea treatments are often enough to treat gut infections but antibiotics can also be used. Fluid intake needs to be carefully monitored as dehydration can easily occur.

If You're HIV Positive

Some gut infections can be particularly severe for HIV positive people particularly if they are immunosuppressed. Nausea and vomiting may also lead to problems with compliance with antiretroviral medication.

Prevention

To avoid gut infections, use gloves for arse play and place a dam over the arse for rimming. Wash your hands after handling used condoms, toys or after having sex involving arse play.

FUNGUS



THRUSH (CANDIDIASIS)

Description

Thrush (also known as Candidiasis) is an infection caused by a yeast called *Candida Albicans*.

Transmission

It is normal to have small amounts of this yeast in the genital area but a range of factors can cause the yeast to overgrow. These factors can include recent antibiotics, soaps and detergents and tight clothing that promotes excessive sweating.

Signs and Symptoms

Thrush can appear on the mouth or your dick and sometime in your arse. It is not an STI but is sometimes related to sex. Symptoms include redness, rash or itching on the part of the body infected. Thrush is more likely to occur if you are HIV positive. Thrush is diagnosed by a simple genital examination but can be confirmed by a swab collected from the infected area.

Treatment

Thrush is treated with anti-fungal creams or tablets.

If You're HIV Positive

Thrush on the cock, balls arse and throat are more common and more severe for people with HIV. Some oral anti-fungal treatments can interact badly with HIV meds so always check with your HIV doctor.

Prevention

To avoid recurrences uncircumcised men should wash (with water only) and dry under their foreskin daily. It may also help to wear light cotton underwear and to avoid tight restrictive clothing.

Acknowledgements

First edition, ACON 2003

Second edition, STIGMA 2008

Text: Brad Gray, Alex Pollard, David McGuigan, Greg Staples (ACON)

Editing: Dr Chris Bourne (SSHC), Barry Edwards (SESAHS), Miranda Shaw, Priyadi Prihaswan (SSWAHS), Kathy Triffitt, Rob Lake (Positive Life NSW), Ben Tart (ACON)

Technical Review: Dr Chris Bourne (SSHC), Dr Craig Rodgers GP

Design: Richard Hughes and Tan Attajarusit

Booklet Design: Slade Smith

Sexually Transmissible Infections in Gay Men Action Group (STIGMA)
South Eastern Sydney and Illawarra Area Health Service, Sydney South West Area Health Service, Northern Sydney Central Coast Health, Positive Life NSW, ACON, National Centre in HIV Social Research and General Practitioners

ISBN: 978-1-86356-049-8



clinics and contacts

You can get a sexual health check-up from your GP or at a sexual health clinic.

Sexual health clinics offer free and confidential STI (including HIV) testing, treatment and information. Specialist medical, nursing, counselling and interpreter services are also available. You don't need your Medicare card.

Free condoms and lube are also available, along with needle and syringe programs.

If you're not sure what tests you should get or you find it embarrassing to ask for specific tests go to the 'What To Ask For' link on www.whytest.org and print out the list of STIs and their tests. You can just take that along to your GP and ask them to do the tests listed.

For more information on STI testing call the Sexual Health Infoline on 1800 451 624 (free call).

For a full list of sexual health clinics in NSW visit: http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sexualhealth/getting_tested.html#clinics

City/East

City

Sydney Sexual Health Centre

Sydney Hospital
Nightingale Wing
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Phone: (02) 9382 7440

Surry Hills

Albion Street Centre

150-154 Albion Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010
Phone: (02) 9332 9600

Inner West

Marrickville

Marrickville Community Health Centre

155-157 Livingstone Road
Marrickville NSW 2204
Phone: (02) 9515 3131

Newtown

Men's Sexual Health Clinic at The Sanctuary

6 Mary Street
Newtown NSW 2042
Phone: (02) 9515 3131

Camperdown

RPA Sexual Health Clinic

Ground Floor, Page Building (Building no.14)
RPA Hospital, Missenden Rd,
Camperdown
Phone: (02) 9515 3131

Northern Sydney

Manly

Manly Sexual Health Service

8/18 Whistler Street (entrance in Market Place)

Manly NSW 2095

Phone: (02) 9977 3288

St Leonards

Clinic 16

Royal North Shore Hospital Building 10, Herbert Street

St Leonards NSW 2065

Phone: (02) 9926 7414

Southern Sydney

Kogarah & Sutherland

Short St Sexual Health Clinic

Short St,

St George Hospital Campus

Kogarah

Phone: (02) 9113 2742

OTHER CONTACTS

Sexual Health Infoline

For information about STIs, testing, treatments and details of the sexual health clinic closest to you.

Free call: 1800 451 624

Gay Men's Health Line

Information and support on all aspects of male to male sex.

Free call: 1800 009 448

ACON – AIDS Council of NSW

Offers a wide range of services including education, support groups, counsellors, advocacy and referral.

www.acon.org.au

Phone: (02) 9206 2000

Free call: 1800 063 060

(outside of Sydney)

GLCS – Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service

Telephone counseling service operates: 5.30pm to 10.30pm, 7 days a week.

www.glcnsw.org.au

Phone: (02) 8594 9596

Free call: 1800 184 527
(outside of Sydney)

Hepatitis C Council of NSW

www.hepatitisc.org.au

Phone: (02) 9332 1599

Free call: 1800 803 990
(outside of Sydney)

Multicultural HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C Service

www.multiculturalhivhepc.net.au

Phone: (02) 9515 5030

Free call: 1800 108 098
(NSW Country)

PEP Hotline (24 hours)

Free call: 1800 PEP NOW
(1800 737 669)

HIV Information Line

1800 451 600

Positive Life NSW

www.positivelife.org.au

Phone: (02) 9361 6011

Free call: 1800 245 677
(outside of Sydney)

The Domestic Violence Line

Free call: 1800 65 64 63

<http://avp.acon.org.au/>

GOLDEN RULES FOR GOOD SEXUAL HEALTH

Get tested regularly

The more sex partners you have the more often you should get tested. At least yearly if you have any casual partners and 3-6 monthly if you have a lot. This reduces the chances of having an undiagnosed STI that can harm your own health as well as increase your risk of picking up or passing on HIV.

Recognise and act on symptoms

If it stings when you piss, if you find a sore on your dick or arse or if you get a rash or itch don't just hope it will go away - get it checked out.

Tell your recent sex partners

If you've been diagnosed with an STI, or even just think you have one, let your recent sex partners know so they can get checked. This reduces the number of STIs in the community and reduces your chances of getting it again.

Get vaccinated for hepatitis A and B

There are vaccinations available for both hepatitis A and B which may be prescribed by a GP or possibly available for free from sexual health clinics.

Use condoms and water based lube

Condoms provide the most effective protection against the transmission of HIV and significantly reduce the risks of picking up a range of other STIs.

