

# SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

## Get the Facts

### What are STIs?

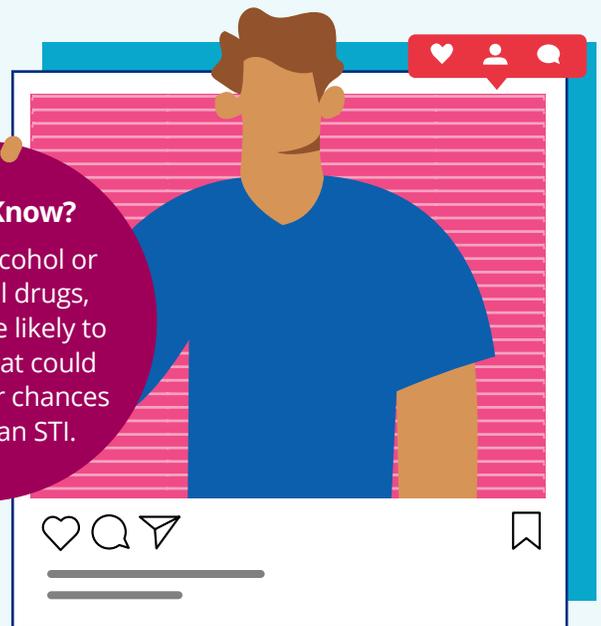
Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infections primarily caused by bacteria and viruses spread from person to person during vaginal, oral, or anal sex or other intimate contact. Some STIs, such as herpes and HPV, are spread through skin-to-skin contact. STIs are also called [sexually transmitted diseases \(STDs\)](#).

### Am I at risk for getting an STI?

- STIs are very common. About [1 in 5 people](#) in the United States had an STI on any given day in 2018.
- People who are 15 to 24 years old are getting [about half](#) of all new STIs.
- You can get an STI even if your partner has no symptoms. It's impossible to know if someone has an STI just by looking at them.
- You can get an STI even if you only have sex with one person, but your chances of getting an STI increase when you have more partners.

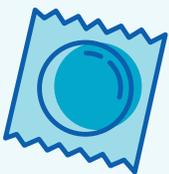
### Did You Know?

If you use alcohol or recreational drugs, you are more likely to take risks that could increase your chances of getting an STI.



### How can I protect myself from getting an STI?

The only sure way to protect yourself from getting an STI is to not have sex. In fact, [the majority of teens \(73%\)](#) are not sexually active. If you are having sex, there are many things you can do to decrease your chances of contracting an STI:



Use protection, like a [male \(external\) condom](#), a [female \(internal\) condom](#), or a [dental dam](#) every time you have vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Learn how to use these barriers correctly before you have sex.



Get vaccinated. Talk with your parent or another trusted adult about making sure you have had the HPV and Hepatitis B vaccines, or ask your doctor about these vaccines at your next check-up.



Get tested for STIs before having sex and ask your partner to get tested too. If either of you have an STI, you should get treated.

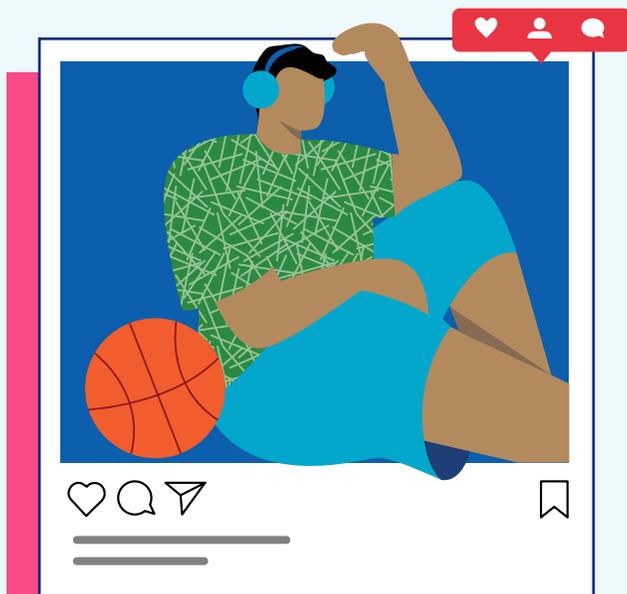
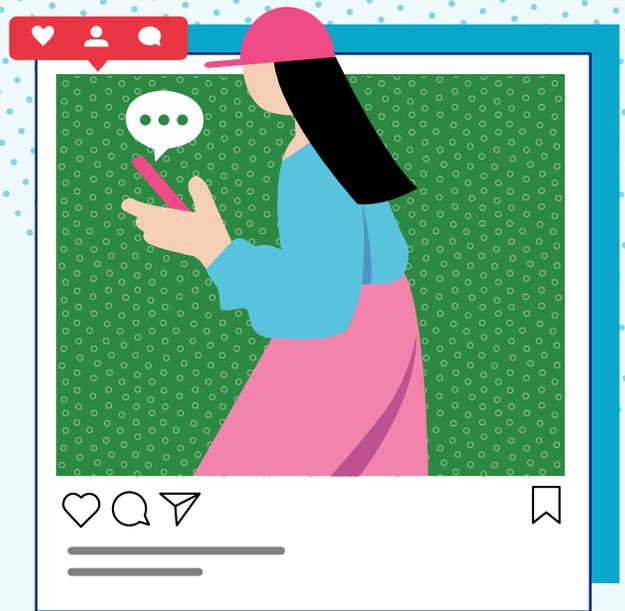


Have fewer sexual partners. Talk with your partner and agree to be in a committed relationship (agree to only have sex with each other).

## How can I find out if I have an STI?

- Get tested regularly if you are having sex! Testing is the only way to know if you have an STI. Learn more about the [CDC's recommendations](#) about what kinds of tests you might need to get and how often you should get tested.
- Talk with your parent or another trusted adult about finding a place to get tested.
- Find fast and confidential testing (including free or low-cost testing) near you by entering your zip code in [this directory](#).

**Are You Worried about Privacy?** Parents and other trusted adults can be great sources of support when it comes to getting tested for STIs. However, if you don't yet feel ready to talk with your parent or guardian about the topic, you can likely get tested and treated confidentially. You can find out your [state's laws relating to minors' access to STI services](#), or ask your doctor about their privacy policy before you begin.



## What do I do if I have an STI?

- Many STIs can be cured. Make sure you follow your doctor's instructions for treatment and avoid sexual activity while you are being treated.
- Some STIs, such as HPV (including genital warts), genital herpes, and HIV, cannot be cured, but medication can help with symptoms. Follow your doctor's instructions for treatment, and ask about how to tell your current or future partner(s) about your STI to protect their health.
- Talk with your partner and encourage them to get tested.

*Avoid sex if you are experiencing any STI symptoms such as discharge, burning, or itching in your penis, vagina, vulva, or anus.*

**Remember:** STIs are very common. Don't be embarrassed to ask questions or to get tested! By learning about STIs and getting tested, you are taking responsibility for your own health and the health of your partner(s). STIs are often easy to treat, but they can cause serious health consequences if they are ignored.

**Not having sex is the only sure way to keep from getting an STI, but you can reduce your risk by using a condom every time you have sex.**

## Learn more!

CDC Fact Sheets about STIs: [www.cdc.gov/std/healthcomm/fact\\_sheets.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/std/healthcomm/fact_sheets.htm)

How to Use Condoms and Other Barriers: [www.cdc.gov/condomeffectiveness/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/condomeffectiveness/index.html)

Minors' Access to STI Services: [www.gutmacher.org/state-policy/explore/minors-access-sti-services](http://www.gutmacher.org/state-policy/explore/minors-access-sti-services)

Which STD Tests Should I Get? (CDC overview of testing recommendations and link to HIV, STI, and hepatitis testing locations): [www.cdc.gov/std/prevention/screeningreccs.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/std/prevention/screeningreccs.htm)

CDC Fact Sheet: Information for Teens and Young Adults: Staying Healthy and Preventing STDs: [www.cdc.gov/std/life-stages-populations/stdfact-teens.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/std/life-stages-populations/stdfact-teens.htm)