

# Testing, Testing

Your guide to STI testing



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POSITIVE SEXUAL HEALTH

Family Planning

## What is an STI?

- STI stands for Sexually Transmissible Infections.
- STIs can be passed on through unprotected sex (vaginal, anal & oral) or genital to genital contact.
- Common STIs include: Chlamydia, Gonorrhoea, Genital Warts, Herpes, & Crabs

## Why test for STIs?

Many STIs can be cured quickly and easily. The sooner you see a doctor the better. Even if it can't be cured, early treatment can mean fewer symptoms, less pain and less interruption to your life.

## Why get tested?

- To look after yourself.
- To look after your partner/s.
- People who have an STI may have no symptoms.
- It's better to know.

## When to test for an STI...

- If you have had unprotected sex (vaginal, oral or anal).
- Before beginning a new relationship.
- If a condom broke – get tested (a few weeks later) and get some tips to make sure condoms are much less likely to break next time.
- As part of a general health check up.
- If you are pregnant.
- If you have symptoms or just feel something is not right.

### Symptoms can include:

Pain when going to the toilet or during sex; unusual discharge or smell; lumps, bumps or sores; lower abdomen pain; sore testicles; bleeding between periods.

*But remember lots of people don't get any symptoms.*

## What happens?

- They'll ask a few questions so they know what tests you need.
- Possible tests you may have include:
  - Urine test (pee in a pot)
  - Swabs (like a cotton bud)
  - Physical exam
  - Smear Test (women 20+ years of age)
  - Blood test (HIV/Hep B/Syphilis)

## What are swabs?

A swab, which is like a special cotton bud, is used to get cells or discharge to send for testing. Swabs may be taken from the outside of the genitals, inside the vagina, anus or a special, very small, swab from inside the urethra (pee hole).

Swabs usually don't hurt at all and only take a few seconds to get.

## What info will the Dr or Nurse want?

A few basic questions about your sexual history:

- How long since your last STI check.
- If you've had any symptoms.
- If you've had a recent change of partner.
- Types of sex you have had.

They're not being nosey or judging you! They are just trying to get information so they know what tests you need to give you the best health care possible.

This information stays **confidential** – that means it's between you and the doctor or nurse you see.

## Here to help!

### Condoms & Oral Dams

These are great at protecting you from STIs.

Condoms are widely available, with lots of sizes, and even come in a range of flavours for protection during oral sex. You can get them for \$5 with a script from your Family Planning clinic or doctor.

Oral dams are used for oral sex on the vulva or anus. They can be harder to find but you can get them through your Family Planning clinic or order them through our website.

More info?

[familyplanning.org.nz](http://familyplanning.org.nz)

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0800 INFO LINE



## Tips for testing

- Guys – try not to pee for 2 hours before your appointment so urine test will work better.
- Girls – you may want to book a time when you don't have your period, but the tests still work if you do have it.
- If you have symptoms, go ASAP. It's much easier to diagnose and stops it getting worse.
- If you're worried or nervous just ask. The staff will be happy to explain everything.

## Myths busted

- There are no little umbrellas or big needles in uncomfortable places! Nothing scarier than a small cotton swab.
- People don't need to be sleeping around to get an STI. It only takes one unprotected encounter.
- Condoms don't work – Oh yes they do! It's far safer to use a condom than not to. They offer great protection against most STIs and unplanned pregnancy.