



for men only

YOUR

SEXUAL

HEALTH

If you are a man that ONLY has sex with women this may not be the brochure for you.

To find resources that best meet your needs check out the following website: <http://www.cdc.gov/men>

Whether you are gay, bisexual or any man who has sex with other men (MSM), there are certain health services that are important for you to talk about with your doctor to protect your sexual health. This brief pamphlet is designed to help you get the best sexual health care during your visit to the doctor.



CHOOSING YOUR DOCTOR

For many Black and Latino gay, bisexual men or other MSM, finding a doctor that you feel comfortable with discussing your sexual behaviors often proves difficult. Part of building a relationship with your doctor is figuring out if you and your doctor are a good match.

During the doctor visits ask yourself:

- Do you feel judgment from your doctor because of your race, ethnicity, sexual behaviors?
- Do you feel confident in your doctor's ability to help you?
- Do you feel like your questions and concerns are welcomed by your doctor?
- Do you feel rushed during your visit?

If your answers to these questions cause you concern, then it might be time to find a new doctor.

To receive a better quality of service, it is important to build a relationship with your doctor that allows for open conversations.

Your doctor may ask you questions that might seem personal, however, by answering these questions you provide your doctor with information that may help you lower your risk of STDs including HIV. These questions could include:

- Are you currently sexually active?
- In the last three to six months, how many sexual partners have you had?
- Do you have sex with women, men, both, transgender persons, or all of the above?
- Have you had unprotected anal, oral or vaginal sex?
- Have you ever had an STD test where your doctor took a q-tip like swab of the back of your throat or rectum?
- Have you had a positive test result for HIV or other STDs? If yes, were you treated at that time?
- Do you or your partner engage in recreational drug use like shooting up or using club drugs?

In some cases, your doctor may not ask you these questions. So, you should be prepared to offer this information on your own.

You should also come to your doctor visits with any additional questions that you have about your sexual health and wellbeing. For example:

- Am I using condoms correctly?
- Should I douche every time before I bottom?
- Sometimes after sex, I find blood in my stool; what does that mean?

Another part of having a conversation with your doctor is being able to talk about any sexual health issues or concerns you may have, including sexual assault or domestic violence. Although your doctor might not have all the resources to help you, s/he should be able to direct you to a trained professional who can assist with these concerns.

SAFER SEX

Sex is natural and should be enjoyable, but remember that it is not without risks and responsibilities so when you have sex:

- Use condoms
- Get tested
- Get treated
- Know your status

Sometimes certain tests specific to gay, bisexual or other MSM are not performed, which leaves many men at risk for STDs, and HIV infection.

If you are having anal or oral sex, ask your doctor about swabbing your throat and/or your rectum for Gonorrhea and Chlamydia, because a pee-in-a-cup test (or urine-based test) will not find Gonorrhea or Chlamydia in your throat or rectum.



CONDOM FACTS

Condoms are an important tool in preventing HIV and STDs. When used correctly, every time you have sex, latex condoms and other barrier methods limit your risk for getting HIV and other STDs. If you use lube, use only water-based with latex condoms because oil-based lubricants weaken the condom.

PREVENT, TEST, AND TREAT

Since many common STDs have NO SYMPTOMS, STD testing should be a regular part of your life if you are sexually active. It is important to talk with your doctor when you notice something different about your body.



The following chart lists four common STDs. You should contact your doctor if you notice any symptoms listed in the chart.

| STD | Possible Symptoms |
|------------------|---|
| Chlamydia | Discharge, burning or itching around the opening penis or anus |
| Gonorrhea | Penile discharge, swollen testicles; soreness and itching in the anal area, anal discharge, anal or rectal pain |
| Syphilis | Painless sore called a chancre; rash on hands/-feet and/or general body rash |
| HIV | Flu-like symptoms during the time of early infection |

In addition to the four STDs listed above, there are other common STDs that have varying symptoms. For more information about other STDs please talk with your doctor or check out the CDC website:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
www.cdc.gov/msmhealth

And when it comes to STDs, the good news is that all STDs are treatable. Some can even be prevented through vaccines and many others can be cured.

NOTIFY YOUR PARTNER

If after being tested you are diagnosed with an STD, it becomes important to:

- get treated for your infection
- and notify your sex partners

Although it is a difficult conversation, it is important that your most recent sex partners be informed that they should be tested. There are many reasons (e.g.,



fear of partner violence) why some men choose to anonymously inform their partners via e-mail. Most health departments have staff that can anonymously inform your partners for you. You can also inform your partners on your own, via email or texting. However, if you decide to anonymously inform your partners you may want to consider this website: www.inspot.org



GET VACCINATED

Beyond testing and using condoms, being vaccinated is another way to limit your risk of getting some STDs. As a man who has sex with men, you should be vaccinated for Hepatitis A & B. Please talk with your doctor about Hepatitis A & B vaccines.

There is also a vaccine for the Human Papillomavirus (HPV), which has been known to cause genital warts as well as forms of anal cancers. Among men, HPV related anal cancer is highest among gay, bisexual and other MSM. You should talk to your doctor about being vaccinated for Human Papillomavirus (HPV). Currently there is only one vaccine available to men for HPV.

STANDARD OF CARE FOR HIV-POSITIVE MSM

HIV-positive gay, bisexual, and MSM have unique sexual health needs and challenges. If you are an HIV-positive gay/MSM, having a doctor who is knowledgeable about HIV care and who can provide you with correct and adequate information is important.

Already having HIV makes a person more susceptible to contracting another STD. So it is important to regularly test for other STDs. Many of the most common STDs: Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, and Syphilis are easily treated. Being HIV positive and contracting other STDs or being co-infected can cause complications with both your immune system and antiretroviral medication, particularly with syphilis co-infection.

Additionally Hepatitis C is more common among HIV positive gay men/MSM. It is recommended that HIV-positive gay men/MSM get tested for Hepatitis C.

PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (PREP)

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) is a new HIV prevention method in which people who do not have HIV take a daily pill to reduce their risk of becoming infected. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the combination medication tenofovir disoproxil fumarate plus emtricitabine (TDF/FTC) for use as PrEP among sexually active adults at risk for HIV infection. In addition, CDC issued an interim guidance on the use of PrEP for MSM at high-risk for HIV acquisition. The guidance underscores the importance of using PrEP with other comprehensive HIV prevention services, including: risk-reduction and medication adherence counseling, condoms, and testing and treatment for other sexually-transmitted infections. For more information, please refer to CDC's resource: Interim Guidance: Pre-exposure Prophylaxis for the Prevention of HIV Infection in Men Who Have Sex with Men at

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/wk/mm6003.pdf>.

This informational brochure for MSM is part of a joint NCSD and NASTAD project made possible by a grant from the MAC AIDS Fund. Please visit our websites at www.ncsddc.org and www.nastad.org.

For more information that promotes sexual health, please visit the following websites:

Condoms and STDS: CDC Prevention Messages:

www.thebody.com/content/art2436.html#std

Hepatitis A Vaccine: What You Need to Know:

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-hep-a.pdf

STD Checkup: You Can't Always Tell if You Have an STD

www.stdcheckup.org/everyone/about.html

Whitman Walker Health: Community, Caring, Quality

www.whitman-walker.org

