

# Tests for sexually transmitted infections

Information and advice for patients: Please read it before your consultation

## *Dartmouth Clinic*

### **What are sexually transmitted infections (STIs)?**

Sexually transmitted infections are infections caused by organisms(bugs) which are passed from one person to another through sex. These infections mainly cause problems in the genital region, but some of them can affect other parts of the body as well.

### **How are STIs diagnosed?**

Sexually transmitted infections are diagnosed by the following tests which we offer to all people who attend the Dartmouth Clinic:

- **Genital swabs** for chlamydia, gonorrhoea and, in women, trichomonas vaginalis
- **Urine testing** for chlamydia and gonorrhoea
- **Blood tests** for syphilis and HIV infection

### **What are the benefits of having these tests?**

These tests can diagnose sexually transmitted infections so that you can be given the appropriate treatment for the infection in order to prevent complications. We offer these tests to both people who have symptoms of an STI and those who don't have any symptoms because many people with an STI do not have symptoms.

All sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, are treatable infections.

### **Are there any risks to the tests?**

There are no risks to these tests, however if you have had a new sexual contact within the last 3 months we would recommend that you have the tests again at a later date as well in case any very recently transmitted infection was not picked up by the tests.

### **Are there any alternative tests?**

There are no alternative tests for these infections. The tests we offer are the standard tests recommended for the accurate and specific diagnosis of sexually transmitted infections.

### **What are the risks of not having the tests?**

If you didn't have some of the tests, there is a risk that you could have an undiagnosed infection which could cause problems in other parts of your body, such as infertility. Certain infections, such as HIV can be potentially fatal (cause death) if undiagnosed. There is also a risk that you could pass an undiagnosed infection on to others through sexual contact.

If you do not wish to have any of the tests or are worried about any of them please let us know during your consultation.

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### How do I get the results?

We will contact you by telephone within 2 weeks if any of your test results are positive. If you haven't heard from us within 2 weeks, then your results were all negative.

### Where can I get more information?

You can get more information about sexually transmitted infections from:

#### NHS Choices

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/sexually-transmitted-infections](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sexually-transmitted-infections)

[www.nhs.uk/livewell/stis](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/stis)

There are also information leaflets about sexually transmitted infections available in the waiting area of the clinic.

### Sources used for the information in this leaflet

- British HIV Association, British Infection Society, British Association of Health and HIV, 'UK national guidelines for HIV testing', September 2008
- British Association for Sexual Health and HIV, 'Sexually transmitted infections: UK national screening and testing guidelines', August 2006

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5420 or email: [swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net](mailto:swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net)



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