

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 including the throat, eyes and rectum.

All sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, are treatable.

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

We offer these tests to 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.

What are the benefits of having these tests?

These tests can diagnose sexually transmitted infections so that you can be given the right treatment for the infection in order to prevent complications.

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. This is to ensure that any transmitted infection that was not initially found is picked up.

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 choose to not have the tests or choose to only 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 will have all been negative.

Further information

You can find more information about our services at:

<http://www.swbh.nhs.uk/services/sexual-health-and-contraception/>

You can get more information about sexually transmitted infections from:

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk/conditions/sexually-transmitted-infections

www.nhs.uk/livewell/stis

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

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our websites www.swbh.nhs.uk and www.swbhengage.com, follow us on Twitter @SWBHnhs and like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs.

Sources used for the information in this leaflet

- The Clinical Effectiveness Group of the British HIV Association for Sexual Health and HIV and the British HIV Association, 'UK National Guidelines on Safer Sex Advice', July 2012.
- The Clinical Effectiveness Group of the British HIV Association for Sexual Health and HIV and the British HIV Association, 'Review of the evidence for the UK national guidelines on safer sex advice', July 2012.

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5495 or email: swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net



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