

# STD PARTNER NOTIFICATION

## WHAT ABOUT YOUR PARTNERS?

### REMEMBER...

Focus on the medical facts about the disease. With most STDs, it is difficult, if not impossible, to tell who had it first. The important thing is that anyone exposed may be infected and should get tested and treated right away.

### HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF AND MY PARTNER(S)?

- Wait until you are sure both you and your partner have completed treatment before having sex again. Too often, people pass a disease back and forth by having sex before they have finished all their medication.
- STDs get from one person to another through sex. They pass easily through the delicate lining of the mouth, vagina, penis, and rectum. Abstinence (not having sex) is the only sure way to prevent the sexual transmission of STDs.
- If you have sex, you can reduce your risk of infection by using latex condoms every time. When used the right way, condoms can help protect you from many common STDs, including HIV. Be sure to put the condom on before the penis touches the vagina, mouth, or anus.
- If you have sex, reduce your number of partners. You can agree to only have sex with one partner who only has sex with you. Use condoms unless tests show that your partner does not have any STDs.
- If you are a person who injects drugs, never share your works (needle and syringe). Do not share or reuse cotton balls, rinse water, or other equipment.
- Do not share needles to pierce body parts, make tattoos, or for anything else.



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Health Services

#### References

CDC. Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).  
[cdc.gov/std/statistics/2022/default.htm](https://cdc.gov/std/statistics/2022/default.htm)

For HIV/STD questions, call  
800-CDC-INFO (English/Espanol)  
888-232-6348 (TTY).

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## YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

- Nearly half of new sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are among people between the ages of 15 and 24.
- One in five people in the US has an STD.
- 2.5 million cases of gonorrhea, chlamydia, and syphilis were reported in the U.S. in 2022 (CDC).

You did not create this infection. It happened to someone else before it happened to you. And now that it has happened to you, here are some questions you might have.

## WHO NEEDS TO KNOW THEY MAY HAVE BEEN EXPOSED?

Anyone you have had sex with recently. Your health provider or counselor can help you figure out just how long "recently" is; it depends on many different things. For HIV and Hepatitis, anyone you have shared needles or works with needs to know too.

## WHY DOES MY PARTNER NEED TO KNOW?

They need to know. Many people do not have symptoms until after they pass the infection on to others or develop serious health problems. Many of these problems can be avoided if people are told about the chances of having an STD, and get tested and treated. Even if your partner(s) has had a check-up recently, chances are they were not tested for STDs.

The health department can help notify people that they may have been exposed and may be infected with an STD. Ask your health provider or counselor to explain how that works.

## I WANT TO TELL MY PARTNER, BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW.

You may want to practice with your health provider or

counselor. Here are some tips that can make a difference:

1. When: Choose a time to talk with your partner when they can give you their complete attention. Allow plenty of time to explain and discuss the problem. The sooner you tell your partner, the sooner they can get checked and treated.
2. Where: Choose a place that is quiet, private, and safe. You do not want interruptions, and you do not want to be overheard. At the same time, if there is a chance that your partner will become violent, you will want to be close to help.
3. How: Focus on the facts and on solving the problem. Avoid accusations and confessions.
  - Say: "I tested positive for chlamydia."
  - Do not say: "You infected me with chlamydia." or "I've given you an STD."
  - Do not say: "You have chlamydia." People can be exposed to STDs without becoming infected.
  - Explain: Many people do not have symptoms until after they have passed the infection on to others or developed serious complications. Getting tested is the only way to know for sure, and serious problems can be avoided if they get tested and treated early.
4. Make sure your partner knows what STD you are talking about! The eight (8) most common STDs are chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, trichomoniasis, human papillomavirus (HPV), herpes simplex virus type 2 (HSV-2), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and hepatitis B virus (HBV).
5. What's next? Your partner(s) needs to get a medical evaluation as soon as possible. They can go to a private physician, a health center, or a public health clinic. Ask your health provider or counselor to help you with the choices you can offer to your partner(s). You should both know that if your partner goes to the same provider that treated you, all information will still be kept confidential. Your information stays private to you; your partner's information stays private to them.

## I AM AFRAID THEY ARE GOING TO BE UPSET.

People can have a lot of different emotions when they find out they may have an STD. Some are angry, others are frightened or withdrawn. Many feel ashamed and embarrassed. You know your partner. How do they usually deal with bad news?

Try to use thoughtful and kind language. STDs do not need blame or guilt to get from one person to another, and blame and guilt will not help you communicate.

**Whatever happens, remember two important points:**

1. You can not control your partner's response, but your own behavior. You can stay calm even if your partner does not.
2. Think before you begin. If you think it is going to be too hard, your public health provider has trained professionals who can inform them for you without letting your partner know anything about you.

## WHAT ARE COMMON STD QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS MY PARTNER MIGHT HAVE?

**"Am I positive?", "Do I have it?"**

Answer: "Possibly. There is no way to know until you get an examination and testing."

**"Are you saying you got this from me?"**

Answer: "I don't know who had this first. I only know that I tested positive and we had sex; that means you should see a doctor and get tested."

**"How is this possible? I've only been with you."**

Answer: "I don't know. Either of us could have had this without knowing it, making it hard to pin down where it came from."

**"I don't have anything. I feel fine. What now?"**

Answer: "I am glad you are not in pain, but that does not mean there is not something going on. I care about you and I want you to be okay. The only way to be sure you are is to get STD testing and an exam."