

WHICH TEST?	HOW DO THEY TEST FOR IT?	HOW DO I KNOW IF I NEED THE TEST?	HOW OFTEN SHOULD I GET TESTED?
HIV	Blood	If your last test was negative or you've never been tested.	At least annually, or every three to six months if you have more than one sex partner.
Syphilis	Blood	A must for sexually active gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM).	
Gonorrhea and Chlamydia of the throat	Throat swab	If you perform oral sex.	
Gonorrhea and Chlamydia of the rectum (butt) or vagina	Rectal (butt) swab	If you receive (bottom) during anal sex.	
Gonorrhea and Chlamydia of the urethra (penis)	Urine screening	If you give (top) during anal sex or receive oral sex.	
Hepatitis C	Blood	If you are living with HIV, were born between 1945 and 1965, or have recently shared injection drug equipment.	

*Find testing locations at:*

[www.knowmystatus.org](http://www.knowmystatus.org)



*Guide to  
STD TESTING*

*Take Charge: A Gay Man's Guide to Sexual Health*

# Men who have Sex with Men and Sexual Health

There are things you need to do to maintain a happy, healthy sex life—like getting tested for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) regularly.

As you know, gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM) are at increased risk of acquiring HIV. MSM account for more than two-thirds of all new HIV cases in Texas.

MSM also face increased vulnerability to STDs other than HIV. STDs increase the chances of HIV infection. If you have HIV, having an STD makes it

more likely that you will pass HIV to someone else. Many STDs are easily curable, and all are treatable. The sooner you know your status, the better your treatment options are.

Don't wait for symptoms. Many STDs have no symptoms at first. The only way to know if you have HIV or another STD is to get tested at a doctor's office or a health department clinic.

It is also possible to get HIV and STD testing kits mailed to you, so you can get tested without having to go to a clinic.

**MSM**

account for

**2/3**

of all new  
HIV infections

## What kinds of tests do MSM need?

When getting tested for gonorrhea and chlamydia, a urine test may not be enough. **A urine test cannot detect gonorrhea or chlamydia in the throat or anus.** If you perform oral sex or have receptive anal sex (bottoming), get a throat rectal swab, or both, to test for gonorrhea and chlamydia.

When getting tested for HIV and other STDs, once isn't enough. Sexually active gay, bisexual, and other MSM should test at least once a year, more often if you have more than one partner or your partner has other partners.

Some STDs are preventable through vaccination. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention recommends that gay and bisexual men get vaccinated against Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B. The CDC recommends the HPV vaccine is recommended for men up to age 26. Individuals under 45 may also receive the vaccine but must first consult with their doctor.

*Get  
Vaccinated*

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis B

HPV

(if you're under 26)

## Some guys only go to the doctor when something is wrong. Do not be that guy!

It is important to feel comfortable discussing all aspects of your health as a gay man with your doctor. If you're not comfortable "coming out" to your doctor, many community-based organizations and HIV prevention clinics can be able to help you find a local doctor who is LGBT-friendly or affirming.

You can also talk to your doctor about other sexual health issues, such as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV, erectile dysfunction, low testosterone, and prostate health.

For sexually active gay and bisexual men, the most effective way to prevent contracting HIV is to be on antiretroviral medications (to treat or prevent infection).

If you are living with HIV, antiretroviral treatment can help you achieve an undetectable status, which means you cannot transmit HIV

through sex. For those not living with HIV, PrEP can prevent HIV before coming into contact with the virus.

Using condoms for anal and vaginal sex is also effective in preventing STDs. However, condoms may not protect you against STDs like genital herpes, which is transmissible via skin-to-skin contact in areas not covered by a condom.

You can also help reduce your vulnerability to HIV acquisition and other STDs by limiting the number of sex partners you have, choosing sexual activities that lessen your chances of HIV or STD exposure, and talking with your partners openly and honestly about HIV and STDs.

Combining this with other prevention strategies, like ART, PrEP, and condoms, increases your ability to protect yourself and your partners, leading to greater sexual health.



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