



**Sullivan
Nicolaides**
PATHOLOGY

Quality is in our DNA

How do you
know if you
have an STI?

YOU DON'T



The only way to
find out is with a
pathology test

Take control

Don't expect to have symptoms

Many people have an STI and have no symptoms. They don't know until it's too late — which is how infections spread so easily. For instance, about 90% of people with chlamydia have no symptoms.

Symptoms can be...

anything from a discharge and itching to pain or bleeding when you are having sex, or a burning sensation when you pass urine. Some STIs can give you sores or lumps around the vagina or penis. Some can give you a high temperature and leave you feeling tired and drained of energy.

The only way to know for sure you have an STI is with a pathology test

Urine tests can show if you have an STI such as chlamydia or gonorrhoea. There are now highly sensitive molecular tests (PCR) that can detect the DNA of an organism and these can give results quickly. For instance, by taking a swab of a sore, a test can be performed that detects the DNA of the herpes virus. Blood tests can detect antibodies produced by your body in response to infections such as syphilis, herpes, hepatitis B and HIV.

There is no single test that covers all STIs.

STIs can have serious long-term health problems for men as well as women

If untreated, some can cause infertility in both men and women. Prolonged HPV infection can cause cervical cancer. HIV, left untreated, can lead to AIDS.



Get tested

TESTING IS EASY

It's just a matter of getting started by seeing your doctor or health clinic.

You can collect the sample yourself

Most STIs are tested on a urine sample. You'll be given a plastic pot and asked to collect a 'first void' sample—which means a small amount of the first urine you pass. You must not have urinated for at least an hour before passing the sample. An early morning urine sample is best as this is the most concentrated.

You can take the container back to your clinic or to a Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology collection centre (www.snp.com.au) Your doctor will give you a request form.

Some STIs need to be tested on a blood sample. Only a small amount of blood is needed, so this is very straightforward and takes only a few minutes. Our collectors do hundreds of these every week.

If you have genital sores your doctor may ask you to take a swab. In some cases they may prefer to do it.

The samples will be sent by courier to our lab where they will be tested and a report sent back to your doctor.

How do you know which tests to have?

It's normal to feel embarrassed but it's really important to tell your doctor everything you can about your sexual history and any specific concerns. They need this to decide which tests to request.

When to get tested

For most infections, testing is best done between 7 and 14 days after you think you've become infected. For some infections it may be up to 3 months (e.g syphilis). Discuss this with your doctor. Too early, and the organisms may not show up. If you have symptoms, see your doctor straight away.

Getting the results

Usually, this starts with a phone call from the clinic. If results are negative, you might be asked to have tests again in 3-6 months. If results are positive, you'll be asked to see the doctor about treatment.

Test results are usually available within 48 hours.

Use condoms

TESTING IS CONFIDENTIAL

Your doctor and your pathologist are legally bound to keep your information secret.

Someone else can tell your partners

They won't know it's you

If your results are positive it is really important to tell your partners. They need to be tested and treated otherwise, you could become re-infected. Clinics typically offer to do this for you. You just provide them with a list of contacts.

TESTING IS FREE

It is covered by Medicare.

How often to get tested?

If you or your partner has any symptoms, you should get tested straight away. If you've recently changed partners you should also get checked. Even if you have no symptoms but you are having sex without condoms, you should make sure you're tested at least once a year. You may need testing more often (up to four times a year) if you are at more risk. Testing and using condoms is the best way to stay in control of your sexual health.

Are you at increased risk?

- ⇒ unprotected sex with multiple partners
- ⇒ history of previous STIs
- ⇒ your partner/s have been diagnosed with an STI
- ⇒ are male and have sex with other men

Testing is easy

Testing is confidential

Testing is free





Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are very common

They are caused by infectious organisms passed on through close bodily contact, usually during sex, in semen, vaginal fluid, anal or throat secretions and blood. Some STIs, such as herpes, can be transmitted by skin-to-skin contact.

- ⇒ Chlamydia
- ⇒ Gonorrhoea
- ⇒ Genital Herpes
- ⇒ Trichomoniasis
- ⇒ Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)
- ⇒ Syphilis
- ⇒ Hepatitis B
- ⇒ HIV

They're spreading faster than ever

Chlamydia — this is 10 times more common than gonorrhoea. In 2016, more than 72,000 cases of chlamydial infection were detected by pathology laboratories. Almost 40% of notifications were among females aged 15-25 years

Gonorrhoea — highly contagious, and on the rise. Notification rates for gonococcal infection have continued to increase. Infections occur predominately in males aged 15-39 years and females aged 15-24 years

Herpes — 1 in 10 people are infected; infection is with you for life

Syphilis — close to the highest rates seen in recent history (mostly in men who have sex with men)

HIV — new diagnoses are at a 20-year high

Where you can have your tests

You can pick up your container at any of our collection centres and drop off your sample without an appointment. If you need a blood test no appointment is necessary.

Locate your nearest collection centre

For a full list of collection centres and the opening hours, visit snp.com.au

SNP Collection Centres Locator App

now available for iPhone and iPad



**Sullivan
Nicolaides**
PATHOLOGY
Quality is in our DNA

SULLIVAN NICOLAIDES PTY LTD • ABN 38 078 202 196
A subsidiary of Sonic Healthcare Limited • ABN 24 004 196 909
24 Hurworth Street • Bowen Hills • Qld 4006 • Australia
Tel (07) 3377 8666 • Fax (07) 3318 7409
PO Box 2014 • Fortitude Valley • Qld 4006 • Australia
www.snp.com.au

DISCLAIMER

The images used in this brochure are for illustrative purposes only. They are from stock libraries and the people portrayed in them are models. In no way is it suggested that these people have health problems.