

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

What should I do if I or my partner has an STI?

KEY WORDS

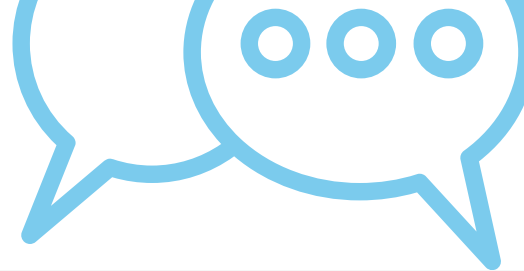
sexually transmitted infections | safe sex | healthcare | communication



Discovering that you or your partner has an STI can be tough, but it's not the end of the world, nor does it need to be the end of your relationship. Here are some tips on steps you can take if this happens to you:

- **Get tested and seek treatment**

Before you discuss the possibility of STIs with your partner, it's important to test yourself to see whether you have actually contracted an STI. Many couples choose to get tested together before starting a sexual relationship, and this is a great idea. If it turns out that either you or your partner do have a STI, consult with your doctor(s) about specific treatments, such as taking antibiotics.

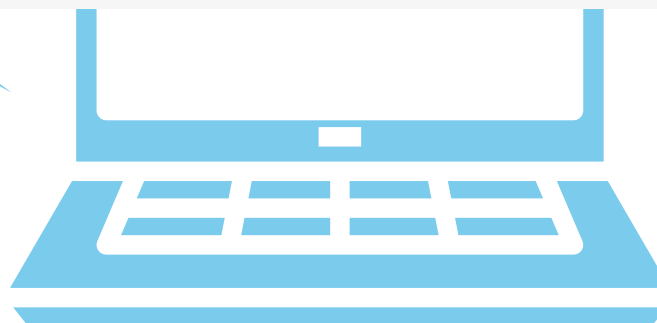


• Talk to your partner

If you have been recently tested and found out that you have an STI or if you know about your STI status from before, you should clearly communicate this with your current partner. In addition, it's important to inform any recent sexual partner(s) about your diagnosis, so that they can seek testing and treatment, which in turn can stop the spread of infection.

It may be difficult, but it's important to gather your courage and not be afraid, as this is the best option for both your safety and the safety of your partner. Here is some advice on **how to approach the topic**:

- Start by choosing a time and place where you both feel comfortable and can talk openly.
- Be honest and direct about your diagnosis, and your treatment.
- Provide them with factual information about the STI, including how it's transmitted and how it can be treated or managed.
- Encourage your partner to get tested and seek medical advice if necessary.



- **Pause sexual activity**

Hold off on sex until both you and your partner complete treatment and get the green light from your doctor that you can start engaging in sexual activities again. After your treatment (such as completing a course of antibiotics), schedule follow-up tests to ensure the infection is gone for good.

- **Practice safer sex**

If you have sex after treatment, always use condoms. They reduce the risk of reinfection or passing an STI to your partner. Going forward, prioritise safer sex practices, which means consistent condom use and regular STI testing.

Those were some tips on how to deal with an STI diagnosis, either your own or your partner's. Remember, **STIs don't define a person or a relationship**, but learning to address and manage them can strengthen the bond between partners.



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