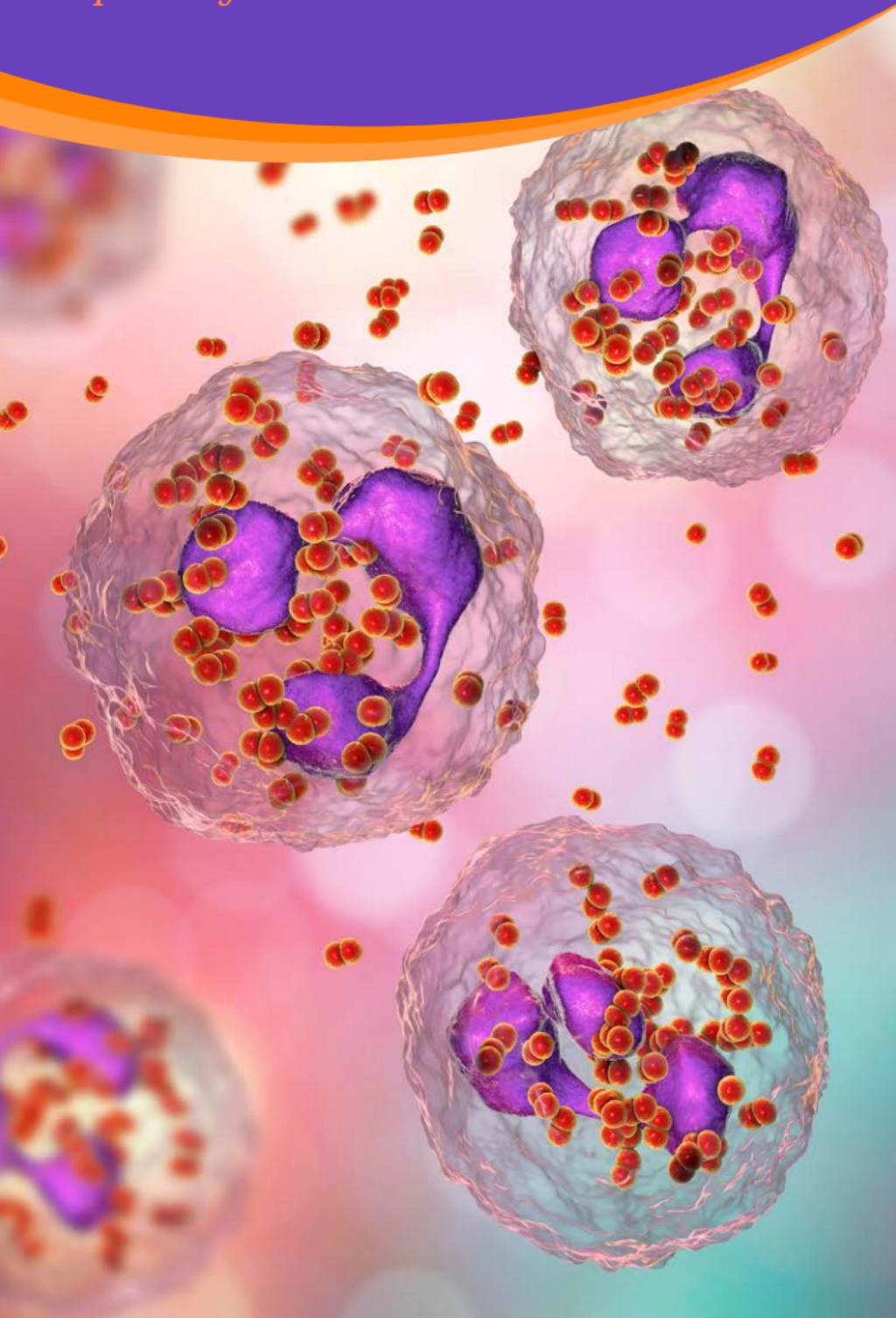


AUSTRALIAN



Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

*Regular screening for
peace of mind*



What are STIs?

STIs are bacterial (e.g. chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis), viral (e.g. herpes, HIV, hepatitis B) or parasitic (e.g. trichomoniasis) infections commonly spread through close sexual contact, including vaginal or anal intercourse, as well as oral sex.

How common are STIs in Australia?

- 1 in 6 Australians will get an STI during their lifetime¹
- In 2022, an estimated 1 in 27 females aged 15-29 had chlamydia²
- Between 2013 and 2023, reported cases of gonorrhoea and syphilis both surged by 169%³
- In 2023, males accounted for 69% of reported gonorrhoea cases and 78% of syphilis cases³
- Despite rising cases of chlamydia, gonorrhoea, and syphilis, testing has significantly dropped since COVID, leading to many undiagnosed STIs in sexually active communities.²

Can I have an STI without symptoms?

Yes, many people with common STIs are asymptomatic, particularly females.

- **Chlamydia:** 85-90% of people have no symptoms.
- **Gonorrhoea:** 80% of females have no symptoms.
- **Syphilis:** 50% of people have no symptoms.



1 in 6 AUSTRALIANS will get an STI in their lifetime.



**Most STIs have
NO SYMPTOMS.**

Who should have regular STI screening?

Regular STI screening is crucial if you're **sexually active** and meet **any** of the following criteria:⁴

- Are aged 15-29
- Want to get tested
- Have had unprotected sex
- Have a new sexual partner(s)
- Have had known exposure to an STI
- Are living in or have travelled to areas with high STIs rates in Australia or overseas

What happens if STIs are left undiagnosed?

If you have an STI that is left undiagnosed and untreated, this could lead to serious health issues such as infertility, pelvic inflammatory disease, pregnancy complications, damage to other organs and even cancer.

What are symptoms of STIs?

There are more than 20 known STIs, some of which may cause symptoms. However, if you've had unprotected genital, anal or oral sex, **it's important to get tested as you may be asymptomatic.**

Symptoms of common STIs could include:

- Pain or burning with urination
- Vaginal or penile discharge
- Testicular and pelvic pain
- Bleeding between periods or after sex
- Pain during sex
- Conjunctivitis
- Anorectal symptoms
- Genital, anal or oral ulcers
- Generalised rash on trunk, palms or soles

How can I get tested for STIs?

Begin by scheduling an appointment with your GP to discuss your sexual history, any symptoms you've noticed and to request an STI screening. For asymptomatic testing, your GP will likely order the following STI tests as recommended by the Australian STI Guidelines: chlamydia, gonorrhoea, HIV and syphilis.⁴ Your GP will also advise on the frequency of testing, typically every three to 12 months depending on your level of risk.²

What does STI testing involve?

Asymptomatic STI testing typically includes a urine sample (or a vaginal swab in females) and a blood test.

Where can I be tested?

Urine and swab samples will most likely be collected at your medical centre and sent to Clinical Labs for testing. For your blood test, you can visit any of Clinical Labs' 1,300+ collection centres with your doctor's referral. For locations, please visit clinicallabs.com.au/location. Clinical Labs welcomes and accepts all pathology request forms.



SEXUALLY ACTIVE?
*Be responsible and have
regular STI screening.*



If left untreated, STIs can cause INFERTILITY.

Can STIs be effectively treated?

Many of the common STIs can be effectively treated and managed once diagnosed. However, if left untreated, these infections can lead to serious health issues, including infertility. That's why regular STI screening is crucial if you're sexually active.

What about partner testing and reinfection?

If you're diagnosed with an STI, it's important for your current partner(s) to be tested to prevent reinfection. Abstain from sexual activity while you and your partner(s) are undergoing treatment and until symptoms have subsided.

The best cure is prevention

Clinical Labs is on a mission to reduce the incidence and spread of STIs through increased patient awareness and encouraging regular testing among those at risk. The best method to avoid being infected with an STI is to practice safe sex through the use of condoms and the preventive vaccines available for HPV and HBV.

References

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4. <https://sti.guidelines.org.au/> (Accessed 2 July 2024).