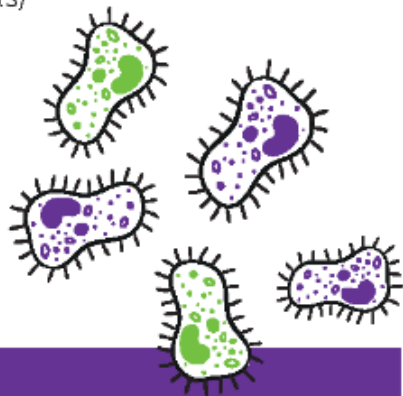


SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIs)

An STI is any kind of bacterial or viral infection passed on through sexual contact without a condom. Sexual contact can include:

- **oral sex** (licking, kissing or sucking someone's genitals)
- **vaginal sex**
- **anal sex**
- **sexual touching**
- **using sex toys**



HOW DO YOU GET TESTED?

Most STIs can be detected by a urine sample, blood test or vaginal swab. A small cotton bud is wiped over the inside of the vagina. A doctor or nurse may do this for you but often you can do it yourself in private. It may be uncomfortable but not painful. Lots of areas now offer home testing where you can order a kit online. Just take a sample yourself and post it for testing. Easy!



HOW CAN YOU PREVENT STIs?

CONDOMS



Just use a condom correctly every time you have sex. It's the only way to protect against both pregnancy and STIs. Made from very thin latex (rubber), they cover the penis/sex toy or line the vagina (female condom), stopping sexual fluids being transferred between partners.

DON'T WORRY!

Most STIs are easy to treat and clinic staff have seen it all. Use our service finder to see where you can get tested and treated. This includes Brook clinics, which provide free, confidential services for under 25s: brook.org.uk/find-a-service

DENTAL DAMS



A dam is a thin square of latex, which can be placed over the genitals or anus before you have oral sex. You can get them from sexual health services or buy them online. The dam might be useful in preventing STIs but there is currently no research to verify this.





HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU'VE GOT ONE?

STIs don't always have symptoms, so if you've had unprotected sex, always get yourself tested ASAP. Don't forget emergency contraception too, to protect from pregnancy.



DID YOU KNOW



Anyone can get an STI. It doesn't matter how many times you've had sex or how many partners you've had.