

TEACHER TIP SHEET



What do you know about STIs?

Kahoot! Quiz for secondary school students

This tip sheet has been designed for teachers and other educators using Family Planning NSW's Kahoot! Quiz [What do you know about STIs?](#) It provides short explanations of the quiz answers, key messages and suggests some further discussion points and resources to support teaching this topic to young people.

1. STI stands for:

→ Sexually Transmissible Infection

In the past we used the term 'sexually transmitted disease' (STD), which is still used in some contexts in Australia and other countries, but currently in NSW we primarily use the term STIs.

2. You can't get an STI if your partner is a virgin

→ False

STIs can be transmitted in many ways, including vaginal, anal and oral sex. But they can also be transmitted in other ways, such as sharing sex toys.

- Ask students to research different ways of STI transmission using the [BodyTalk](#) website or [Your Best Defence](#) booklet.
- Make links from this to identify sexual activities that have a high risk of STI transmission and strategies for STI prevention.
- Young people should also be able to identify safer activities partners can do together that have low risk or no risk of STI transmission.

3. Some sexually transmitted infections are also Blood Borne Viruses (BBVs). You can also get a BBV through tattooing or body piercing.

→ True

Hepatitis B and HIV are BBVs that can be transmitted through sexual activities, but they can also be transmitted through non-sterile (unclean) tattoo or body piercing equipment.

- People should only have tattooing and piercing done by licenced, trained professionals. If you are thinking of getting a tattoo or piercing, you can ask the staff about the precautions they use to prevent infections.

4. The best way to avoid STIs is:

→ Use condoms

Using a condom or dam correctly for sexual activities involving vaginal, anal or oral sex minimises the amount of genital skin-to-skin contact and stops the transfer of bodily fluids.

- Condoms are the only form of contraception that also protects from STIs. Other forms of contraception prevent pregnancy but don't protect from STIs.
- Douching isn't recommended as it can change the balance of vaginal bacteria and natural acidity in a healthy vagina, which protects it from infections or irritation.
- Find out more about how to use condoms and dams on the [BodyTalk](#) website.
- Discuss consent and safe sex with students and how these are important parts of having healthy relationships.
- If people don't want to have sex, or don't have any condoms, there are other activities partners can do together that have no risk or low risk of STIs.
- Vaccines are available to prevent some STIs, such as hepatitis B and HPV, which can cause genital warts or lead to cervical cancer.

5. What is the most common STI in Australia?

→ Chlamydia.

Chlamydia is the most frequently reported infectious disease in Australia,¹ particularly among young people aged between 15 and 29 years.

- Chlamydia usually has no symptoms, so often the only way to know you have it is by having an STI test.
- It can be easily tested for with a urine test and treated with antibiotic tablets.
- Testing and treatment is important for chlamydia and all STIs as they can cause a range of health issues if left untreated.
- Chlamydia notifications are higher in women than in men in all age groups (441.8 vs 349.9 per 100,000 in 2017) and rates are higher in some priority population groups and regions, such as remote/very remote areas.²

6. You can tell what sort of people would have STIs.

→ False.

Anyone can get a sexually transmissible infection and it's usually not always possible to tell by looking at someone if they have an STI.

- Some STIs produce discharge or other noticeable signs, while others have few or no symptoms, especially in the early stages.
- To be protected from STIs, get yourself and your partner tested for STIs before engaging in sexual activities, and practice safer sex by always using condoms, dams or gloves.

¹ <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/chlamydia>

² <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/pregnancy-care-guidelines/part-g-targeted-maternal-health-tests/chlamydia>

7. When should a person have an STI test?

→ All of the above.

People should have an STI test when starting a new sexual relationship, if they have ever had unprotected sex (including vaginal, anal and oral sex) but not been tested, and if they or their partner has symptoms.

- Ask students to think of other reasons to get tested. These may include:
 - If their partner has been diagnosed with an STI
 - If a person or their partner has had more than one sexual partner
 - If they have ever shared needles for drugs, tattooing or piercing
 - If they or their partner want to start having sex without using a condom
 - If they are planning a pregnancy or are already pregnant
- Find out more about when and how to get tested on bodytalk.org.au
- Watch our video about how to make an appointment and what happens when [getting a sexual health check](#).

8. All STIs are treatable.

→ True.

Many STIs can be cured, especially if treatment starts in the early stages. The treatment may be as simple as being prescribed a course of antibiotics. However, some STIs and BBVs can't be cured, but they can be treated and controlled with medicines and good management.

- For example, there is no cure for genital herpes. Antiviral medications can be used to prevent or shorten herpes outbreaks, but the disease cannot be eliminated from your body.
- HIV has no cure, but antiretroviral medications reduce the amount of virus present in the blood. This therapy slows down the progression of the disease and when the viral load becomes low enough it can prevent transmitting the disease to partners. There are also medications available to prevent HIV developing which can be taken by people in high risk groups before or immediately after possible exposure to the virus.
- Whilst prevention is best, getting tested and treated early is the best way to keep yourself and your partner healthy.

Want to know more?

- Visit the BodyTalk website bodytalk.org.au to find more information for students and teachers
- Family Planning NSW's [STI Kit](#) and contains a range of activities and resources for teaching young people about STIs
- Enrol in one of our NESA Registered professional development [courses for teachers](#) or request [customised training](#) for your team
- Contact our Education team to discuss your needs by phone (02) 8752 4300 or email education@fpnsw.org.au