Remind me, what’s an STI? And why are they relevant to me?

- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are often caused by bacteria or viruses and are typically (though not always) passed from one person to another during sexual contact.

- STIs can be transmitted through kissing, external genitalia contact, vaginal, anal, and oral sex, exposure to blood, and shared contact with sex toys, etc.

- All STIs can be treated and some can be cured.

- STIs are very common — more than half of us will get one at some time in our lives.

- Because many college students explore sexually and romantically during college, college students are at higher risk for STIs.

- STIs can be prevented. Practicing safer sex reduces your risk of getting an STI.

- If you believe you’re at risk of infection, getting tested (whether or not you have symptoms) allows you to get any treatments you may need.
How can I avoid STIs?

It’s hard to avoid STIs completely, but you can reduce your risk by following these tips.

- **Be Sex Smart:** You usually cannot “tell by looking” if someone is infected with an STI. Many STIs are asymptomatic.

- **Use Barrier Protection:** Unprotected oral, anal, and vaginal sex can spread STIs. Safer sex products (internal and external condoms, lube, etc.) are available in the Cornell Health pharmacy.

- **Get Tested Regularly:** STIs can cause infertility and other long-term health problems if not diagnosed and treated early.

[Connect to testing HERE for Peace of Mind](health.cornell.edu)
When should I get tested for STIs?

If you’re **not** experiencing symptoms...

- **It depends:** Often once a year, but per CDC guidelines *
- Make an appointment with a **sexual health nurse** online via the myCornellHealth patient portal at [health.cornell.edu](http://health.cornell.edu) or by phone (607-255-5155).

If you **are** experiencing symptoms...

- **As soon as possible**
- Make an appointment with a **medical clinician** online via the myCornellHealth patient portal at [health.cornell.edu](http://health.cornell.edu) or by phone (607-255-5155).

**Symptoms of STIs include:** Discomfort (with or without sexual activity), increased pain or urgency with urination, a change in your genitals (color, odor, bumps, lesions, itching, or burning), and irregular discharge from your genitals. However, STIs are often present without symptoms.

*CDC testing guidelines: [cdc.gov/std/prevention/screeningreccs](http://cdc.gov/std/prevention/screeningreccs)*
How much does testing cost?

**At Cornell Health:**

Students on a student health plan (SHP or SHP+) OR who are covered by private insurance and pay the Student Health Fee...

- Pay **NO CHARGE** for STI testing done at Cornell Health.
- If treatment is prescribed, any additional appointment(s) will be a $10 copay for students on SHP and for students who are covered by private insurance and pay the health fee (no copay for students on SHP+). Prescription medications may be an additional cost.

**Off campus:**

- Charges may vary. Check with your provider and with your insurance plan.
Sexual Health & STIs

Viruses, Bacteria & Warts (Oh My!)

health.cornell.edu
What actually happens during an STI test?

- Depending on your sex, gender, symptoms, and sexual history, a provider may:
  - Ask detailed questions about your sexual activity.
  - Answer any questions you have.
  - Conduct a physical assessment/examination.
  - Collect a sample by swabbing your throat, penis, vagina, or anus, or provide you with instructions to take a sample.
  - Send you to the lab for a blood sample.

- There isn’t “one test for everything,” but our health care providers can help you know what you need.
  - STIs can be bacterial, viral, fungal, etc., and there is no single all-inclusive test. When you get tested, you may require several different tests, all in the pursuit of giving you the most accurate information about your health.
Will my parents/guardians find out I got tested at Cornell Health?

Unless you ask us to tell them (and fill out a release of information), **NO!**

- **Your care at Cornell Health is confidential.**
- Because there is **no charge for STI screening**, it will not show up on any bill. Any charges that may apply for STI *treatment* would appear on your Bursar bill as “Cornell Health Services.”
- **Health records** are maintained through a secure electronic health records (EHR) system and are completely separate from all other university records. Your privacy of this information is protected by law.
- If you have any concerns about the **confidentiality** of your health care, please speak with your health care provider or with Cornell Health’s Privacy Officer (607-255-7896).

*For students on a student health plan (SHP or SHP+) or students who are covered by private insurance and pay the Student Health Fee*
Where can I get tested?

Cornell Health

- Consultation with our Sexual Health Nurses can help you explore options for safer sex and consider whether STI screening may be helpful for you and your partner(s).

Off Campus

- The Tompkins County Health Department makes free STI testing available to its residents. They contract with the local Planned Parenthood (607-273-1513) to provide this service for residents of Tompkins County.
- You may also contact your own primary health care provider for assistance.
Visit the Fact Sheet Library at health.cornell.edu to learn more about sexual health care, including:

- Routine sexual health checkups (e.g. GYN visits).
- Safer sex information and pharmacy supplies.
- Contraception and emergency contraception (EC).
- HIV prevention, testing, management, and support.
- Pregnancy testing, options counseling, support, and referral.
- Transgender services, including gender-affirming hormones.
- Assistance to victims of sexual violence.
- Colposcopy as a follow-up for abnormal Pap smear results.
- Counseling, support, and referral for issues and concerns related to sexual & gender identity, intimacy, sexual functioning, and sexual trauma.