

We're getting married, so what do sexually transmitted diseases (STD) have to do with us?

Many people who have an STD look and feel healthy. Sometimes, they don't even know they are infected, but they can still infect other people. The only way to know for sure is to be tested.

Who should be tested?

Consider being tested if you (or your partner):

- Have had **unprotected sex** (vaginal, anal, or oral) without a latex condom;
- Have **shared needles or syringes** for injecting drugs, body piercing, tattooing, or any other reason;
- Have had **multiple partners** in the past; or
- Are **pregnant** or thinking about becoming pregnant. Mothers can infect their babies while pregnant, during labor and delivery, and through breastfeeding.

If you have an STD, early treatment can help you have a healthy baby.

What does an HIV test show?

An HIV test looks for antibodies to HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. It can take up to six months for HIV to show up in your body. If you have done anything risky during the six months right before you have the test done, you may need to take another test later.

What is risky behavior?

Risky behavior means doing things that might expose you to the blood or body fluids of an infected person.

This includes:

- Having unprotected sex;
- Having multiple partners;
- Sharing needles or syringes (for injecting drugs, tattooing, body piercing); or
- Having other sexually transmitted diseases in the past (i.e.; Genital Herpes, Genital Warts, Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, and Syphilis).

Who will know if I take an HIV test?

There are two ways to take an HIV test:

- Confidential testing**—The fact that you have been tested will not be shared with anyone without your consent.
- Anonymous testing**—You do not have to give your name for this test.

Where can I get an HIV test?

Go to <http://www.in.gov/isdh/23727.htm> for information about the Counseling, Testing, and Referral Program and a list of sites to get tested or, call 1-800-433-0746.

Are there any other STDs that I should know about?

HIV is not the only infection that is sexually transmitted. Some STDs such as Genital Warts, Genital Herpes, and HIV can be treated but cannot be cured. Others such as Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, and Syphilis can be cured but may cause serious problems if left untreated.

These problems can include:

- Sterility for both men and women;
- Cancers linked to Genital Warts;
- Complications for babies born to women with untreated infections;
- Spontaneous abortions; and
- Increased risk for getting HIV.

What are the signs and symptoms of STDs?

Often there are no signs or symptoms, especially for women.

If there are symptoms, they can include:

- Genital sores;
- Discharge from penis or vagina;
- Burning sensation when urinating;
- Unexplained body rash; or
- Abdominal pain for women.

Facts About Sexually Transmitted Diseases

- You cannot tell by looking that a person has an STD or HIV disease.
- It's possible to have an STD (including HIV) and not feel sick.
- Sometimes there are signs and symptoms, but many times there are not.
- With some STDs (like Syphilis) symptoms such as sores and rashes will disappear by themselves, but that does not mean that the STD is cured.
- Some STDs cannot be cured.
- Untreated STDs can cause serious health problems.
- Mothers can infect their babies if they are not treated.

If you have questions about or would like to be tested for HIV, STDs, or other diseases, contact your health care provider, local health department, or call:

National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Info Hotline at: 1-800-232-4636

(Options: press '1' for English or '2' for Spanish; then, press '1' for general health information.)

To order more brochures, go to

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Print out the 'Request for Distribution' form. Put the name and address the brochures are to be delivered to in the 'Deliver to' box, write how many you want to order under 'Quantity Requested,' #7025 under 'State Number,' and list *Before You Marry* as the 'Name/Title Description'.

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Indiana State
Department of Health

Before You Marry



Information on
sexually transmitted
diseases and HIV