



Getting tested for STIs and BBVs – the basics

Where can I get tested?

- Testing for STIs and BBVs is simple, quick and free at your local health clinic – just ask.

How often should I test?

- If you've had sex without a condom with a new partner, or something has happened like a broken condom, or you've shared injecting equipment with other people – get tested as soon as you can.
- If you have sex without a condom with a new partner it's a good idea to get tested for STIs to protect yourself and your sexual partners.
- STIs and BBVs don't always have symptoms or signs. The only way of knowing whether you have an STI or BBV is to get tested.
- Get tested for STIs at least every six to 12 months.

How are the tests done?

- There are different types of tests for different STIs and BBVs.
- Some STIs are tested by peeing in a jar and by taking a test of your blood.
- BBV testing is by testing your blood.
- Before being tested you may be asked personal questions about sex. Try not to be embarrassed. Your answers help the clinic work out which tests to do.
- The doctor or nurse may ask to examine your genitals or inside your mouth. This is because some STIs can be checked for just by looking.
- Don't get stressed. The doctors and nurses at the clinic do these examinations every day.

Will the test be done in private?

- Yes.

How will I get the results of the test?

- Some tests are done at the clinic and the results can be given on the same day.



- Mostly your tests will be sent to another place (laboratory) for testing. The laboratory sends the results back to your clinic. The doctor, clinic nurse or Aboriginal health worker will tell you the results.

If I have an STI or BBV, who else will be told?

- Your partner will not be told about your test results without your permission. No one else in your family or community will be told about your test results without your permission.
- Test results are sent to health departments so we know whether STI and BBV rates are going up or down in a community, and to make sure the right medicine and follow-up is available.

If I have an STI or BBV, who should I tell?

- If you have an STI or BBV, you need to let your sexual partners know they should get tested. This is to make sure they don't have an STI or BBV too, and that they don't pass it on to other people. You can tell your partner yourself. Your clinic can help you do this but only with your permission.
- This is called 'contact tracing'. Contact tracing is not about blame. It's just to make sure that as many people as possible who may have an STI or BBV get tested and treated.
- The clinic can help you with contact tracing – but only with your permission. This is confidential – the clinic will let people you have had sex with know that it's time to have a test. The clinic will not mention your name to the people they contact.

What happens if I have an STI or BBV?

- Being told you have an STI or BBV can be a shock. It can be hard to take in what you're being told.
- The most important thing is to make sure you understand what the doctor and nurse are explaining about taking the medicine. If you don't understand just say so.
- Don't be shame – it's better to ask. Staff at the clinic will understand if you're feeling stressed.

Getting treated

- Most STIs can be fixed or cured with medicine.



- For HIV you will always have HIV. It's important to take your HIV medication every day to stay healthy.
- There is medicine that can cure hepatitis C in about 3 - 6 months.

Retesting – how often to test?

- Getting treated for an STI or BBV doesn't stop you picking up the same STI or BBV again.
- It's important to keep using condoms and to keep testing regularly – at least every six months.

Let's look after our health and get tested for STIs and BBVs. If we all test and get treated, we can stop the spread of STIs and BBVs in our community.