

GET YOURSELF TALKING ABOUT STD TESTING



Talking with Your Health Care Provider

You can't assume that you - or your health care provider for that matter - would know if you had an STD as most show no signs and have no symptoms. That's right, you can't tell just by "looking." Getting tested is the only way to know for sure. GYT is here to make this easy on you.

Don't Assume...

- That you've been tested for STDs if you've donated blood or had a pap test.
- That you're STD-free just because your health care provider doesn't bring up testing.

The only way to be sure you are tested is to ask.

Another reason to talk with your health care provider about testing is to determine what STDs you should be tested for. There is no "one test" for all STDs. So - GYT! Get Yourself Talking and Tested.

Make an Appointment

- Not sure where to go to find a testing center near you? Text your zipcode to GYTNOW (468669) or visit GYTNOW.org.
- When you call to make an appointment, be sure to say that you want to get tested for STDs. When you call, you can ask what the cost for the tests will be (if you are paying yourself). If the cost is a concern, ask if they offer free testing or testing on a sliding scale where the cost is adjusted based on what you can afford. There are places that will offer free or low-cost testing if you can't afford it

Before the Appointment

- Questions pop up at random times, and in the back of your head you're like, 'I'm going to ask the doctor about that!' - but then you totally forget to ask. So think through any questions you might have, write them down, and bring the list with you.
- If you've noticed something going on "down there", make a note of it.
- There are no dumb questions. After all, this is YOUR visit.
- Anything you can think of to ask a health care provider about, from changes in your body to mysterious bumps, to how infections might or might not be transmitted - they've most definitely heard it before and won't be shocked.

- Read up. It's always helpful to have your facts straight before you get there. GYTNOW.org has all kinds of info on STDs. You can watch a video online that follows MTV VJ Carlos Santos as he gets tested so you know what to expect at your testing appointment.

Day of Your Appointment

- Show up.
- Bring along your friend, sister, or bf/gf with you if you feel nervous.
- Some doctor's offices and clinics ask you to fill out a form that asks about any health issues or concerns. This is a good place to write down that you have questions about STD testing.
- Health care providers don't always bring up getting tested for STDs including HIV. So don't assume that if they don't bring it up that you're STD free. The only way to know is to ask to GYT.
- If you are seeing your doctor for something altogether different, you might as well use the opportunity to check in on your sexual health too. Take the lead and bring up STD testing.

Just Ask

- So, you have to ask. You may feel a little nervous or embarrassed to ask to be tested - that's okay, a lot of people do.
- STDs are very common, so this is nothing new to your doctor. They do this every day. So ask away - spit it out however you can. You can say that...
 - You've heard that people your age are supposed to be tested regularly for STDs. It is something you want to do for your health.
 - A friend of yours was recently tested, and you want to know if it's something you should do as well.
- You are doing the right thing. Asking to be tested shows that you are taking care of your sex life.
- Tell a nurse or assistant, if that's easier than bringing it up with your primary doctor or other provider.
- Once you start the conversation, you'll feel proud and relieved for taking charge.

GET YOURSELF TALKING ABOUT STD TESTING cont...



Day of Your Appointment (cont...)

Be Honest

- As part of your exam you might be asked what seems like a lot of very personal questions about your sex life. They are not doing this to judge you or be nosy - they're there to help you stay healthy.
- You might feel a little embarrassed, but the best way that they can help you is if you answer truthfully about your sex life. Testing is confidential.
- These questions might include:
 - if you've had sex
 - how many partners you've had
 - do you have sex with women, men or both?
 - do you have oral sex?
 - do you have anal sex?
 - do you use condoms?
 - do you have symptoms - what is different from what you normally experience?
 - have you had an STD?
 - do you know if your partner(s) have any STDs or symptoms of STDs?
 - if you're a woman, when was your last period?

KEEP IN MIND: There isn't one test for all STDs, so be sure to ask which STDs your provider is testing you for.

Be Proactive

Since you're already there, you might as well discuss which contraception method is best for you in addition to using condoms (cause they're THE only way to prevent against unintended pregnancy and STDs).

Before You Leave - Follow Up

- Be sure to ask when you'll get the test results, and if they will call you or if you should call them.
- Don't assume that no news is good news—remember to follow up with them if you don't hear back

What if I Have Something?

Breathe. If you do have an STD, remember that many STDs are curable and ALL are treatable. Talk to your health care provider about your treatment plan. Be sure to ask a lot of questions so that you understand next steps. Talk to your doctor about how to best tell your partner(s) about this so they can be sure to get tested and treated, too, if necessary.

For more information about STDs and STD testing, including what you can expect and how to talk to your partner about it, go to www.GYTNOW.org.