



CONDOMS ARE THE BEST WAY TO STOP THE TRANSMISSION OF STIs AND HIV

### Should I get tested for STIs?

Getting tested for STIs is important, STIs do not go away by themselves and can have significant health consequences if they are not treated. Regular sexual health checks to test for STIs are an essential part of looking after your health. A sexual health check is easy and quick, usually just involving a vaginal swab or urine sample and a simple blood test. Most common STIs are easy to treat.

### How often should I have a sexual health check?

A yearly sexual health check is recommended, or more often if you have more sexual partners. If you are in a long term monogamous relationship and have both been tested, you don't need to get tested again unless one of you has a new sexual partner.

### Where can I get a sexual health check?

You can get a sexual health check at sexual health clinics, family planning clinics, or your GP. See the list of services on the last page.

### Preventing unplanned pregnancy

Pregnancy happens when a sperm and egg meet, fertilisation occurs, and the fertilised egg implants in the uterus (womb). Pregnancy can occur even with one act of sex, if it's your first time having sex, during your period, and even if the penis is withdrawn from the vagina before ejaculation.

### What is contraception?

Contraception is something that prevents pregnancy. Methods of contraception available include:

- Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARCs). LARCs are contraceptive methods that are highly effective, work for a long time, and are quickly reversible when you stop using them. LARCs include the contraceptive implant (the rod) and intrauterine devices (IUDs).
- Hormonal methods, such as the pill and the contraceptive injection.
- Barrier methods-including condoms. (Condoms are the only contraceptive method that also protects you from STIs) To discuss contraception and which method might suit you, see a nurse or doctor at SHFPACT or see your GP.

### Emergency contraception (EC).

Emergency contraception reduces the risk of pregnancy after unprotected sex. Unprotected sex is where body fluids come in contact, such as where semen has entered the vagina. This may occur when no contraception was used, or contraception failed (such as a condom breaking or slipping off). Emergency contraception can be tablets or a Copper IUD. EC needs to be used as soon as possible after the unprotected sex occurs. There are two different types of EC tablets available:

- **Levonorgestrel EC.** Levonorgestrel EC must be taken **within 3 days** of the sexual activity. The sooner you take it, the better because its effectiveness decreases over time.
  - Where can I get it?** In the ACT, you can get Levonorgestrel EC free from the Walk-in Centres (in Tuggeranong, Gungahlin, Weston, Dickson, and Belconnen); Canberra Sexual Health Centre (at The Canberra Hospital); and from the Junction Youth Health Service in Civic. It is also available at most pharmacies and from SHFPACT for a low cost.
- **EllaOne** is the other EC available in a tablet. It is thought to be more effective than Levonorgestrel EC and needs to be used **within 5 days** of unprotected sex.

**Where can I get it?** EllaOne is available from most pharmacies. **The Copper IUD** is the most effective form of emergency contraception and is over 99% effective at preventing pregnancy. It needs to be used within 5 days of the unprotected sex. For more information, call SHFPACT on 62473077.

For more information on safe sex, contraception, STIs, and relationships, see the following websites



Do you need somebody to talk to about sexual health, lifestyles or relationships? The services below are only a text, click or call away!



SHFPACT is a health promotion charity (HPC) assisted with funding from the ACT Government.

# SHLiRP

## Sexual Health Lifestyles & Relationships Program



# ENJOYING SEX SAFELY



SHLiRP is assisted with funding from the ACT Government.

Last updated June 2023

## What is sex?

### Sex can mean different things to different people.

A better way to describe sex would be to say sexual activity, as sex can include many different things.

Sex can include:

- Penetration of the vulva/vagina or anus by another person using any part of the body or any object
- Contact between a mouth and a vulva, penis, or anus.
- Any other sexual activity that may involve another person/ people like kissing and mutual masturbation.

Sex is a normal human experience, that can be fun and pleasurable. This brochure is about how to participate in sexual activities in safe and healthy ways.

### Defining safe sex

Safe sex is about taking care of your physical and emotional wellbeing.

Safe sex means:

- Only having sex with the full consent of everyone involved.
- Feeling good about your decision.
- Preventing the transmission of sexually transmissible infections (STIs).
- Preventing unplanned pregnancy.

TESTING IS IMPORTANT

### Sex always requires consent

No matter how sex is defined, everyone involved must give consent if it involves another person or people.

- Consent needs to be informed, voluntary, and mutual. This means that all people involved know what is happening or going to happen and agree to it freely. Consent is an active and ongoing process.
- Consent means that a person must do or say something that clearly indicates they agree to something that they fully understand. This can be with through words, or behaviours.
- Consent must be given in every sexual encounter – every time. Even if it has been given before.
- Consent is required in every relationship – no matter how long you have been together or how long you plan to stay together.
- Consent can be taken back at any time – it's always okay to change your mind.

- Consent is an essential part of respecting the person/people you are with, their sexual rights and yours.
- It's essential to check in regularly to see if the person/people you are having sex with are still giving consent to what is happening. Some ways to check in is to ask questions like:
  - o "Is this okay?"
  - o "Do you still want to do this?"
  - o "Do you need a break?"
  - o "Do you want to stop?"
  - o "What would you like to do next?"
- If a person does not respond – they are not giving consent and all sexual activity must stop.
- If a person communicates no or wants to stop – they are not giving consent and all sexual activity must stop.
- If a person is drunk or under the influence of drugs, they cannot consent, and there should be no sexual activity.
- If there is any doubt, confusion, or mixed messages about consent, you need to stop and talk about it.

If you feel that you may have been sexually assaulted recently, or in the past, please contact one of the following support services:

Canberra Rape  
Crisis Centre



1800  
Respect



Consent  
Video



## Feeling good about your decision

### Sex should be a positive, pleasurable experience.

Sometimes we can feel all sorts of pressures to have sex, and while we may say yes and mean it, it's also important to feel good about that decision.

Things that help us to make good decisions include:

- Getting accurate information on safe sex. See over.
- Thinking about your own boundaries and what feels right for you. Your boundaries may change over time so it's good to revisit them now and then. Only you know what your boundaries are so it's important to communicate about these to sexual partners. This also gives you an opportunity to learn what their boundaries are.

FEEL GOOD  
ABOUT YOUR  
DECISION

GET THE  
INFO YOU  
NEED

CONSENT  
MATTERS

- Talking with sexual partners before and during sexual activity. Being honest and open is important and is part of a healthy relationship. Some things to talk about include: What you both like and don't like; what each of you is expecting from the sexual activity; the use of condoms; and contraception.
- Thinking about how alcohol or drugs might affect your decision. Being drunk or under the influence of other drugs can affect your ability to make good decisions and can make it harder to convey if you are giving consent or not. If you are very drunk or are high, you are not able to give consent.

## Preventing sexually transmissible infections (STIs)

### What are STIs, and how do you get them?

STIs are bacteria or viruses that are sexually transmitted. They are transmitted from one person to another through the exchange of body fluids (such as semen, vaginal fluid, anal secretions), and through skin-to-skin contact. Some STIs you may have heard of are chlamydia and gonorrhoea.

### How do you prevent getting STIs?

The best way to reduce your chance of getting an STI is to use condoms and dams (a dam is fine latex sheet that somebody can place over the vulva or anal area during oral sex).