

Sexually Transmitted Diseases aka STDs

STDs. Just the saying it out loud makes people cringe and no one really wants to talk about it. But, STDs can happen to anyone so let's chat about treatment and testing!

WHAT PUTS ME AT RISK OF CATCHING AN STD?

Any unprotected sexual contact with someone carrying an STD puts you at risk for an infection. This includes vaginal, anal, and even oral sex. Many STDs do not have any physical symptoms so unless both you and your partner have both been tested recently its best to play it safe and use protection. That means condoms and dental dams! Both methods come in all sorts of fun colors and flavors so make their presence a fun an exciting part of your bedroom play!

OKAY, SO I KNOW I SHOULD GET TESTED BUT HOW OFTEN?

Like I said before, many STDs may not have symptoms right away so you want to get tested before something goes wrong. Many STDs can be treated with a simple round of antibiotics! If you are sexually active you should get tested at least annually and between new partners.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT WHEN I GET AN STD TEST?

The two most common STDs (chlamydia and gonorrhea) can be tested with just a urine sample. Others may require a blood test or a swab from affected area. These are samples that your doctor probably is already taking at your annual physical or wellness exam, but they don't always automatically screen for STDs so make sure you ask. Getting tested isn't something to be embarrassed about, you should be proud of what a responsible human being you are!

WHERE CAN I GO TO GET TESTED IN SAN DIEGO?

San Diego Planned Parenthood clinics: <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-center/all/all/92092>
Other clinics in San Diego: <http://www.fhcsd.org/locations/teen-health.cfm>
<http://www.thecentersd.org/other-resources/hiv-and-std-testing.html>
<http://sdfamilycare.org/teen-services/>

DO I REALLY HAVE TO GO INTO A CLINIC TO GET TESTED?

Not anymore for most of them! There are multiple home testing kits available. Some you purchase the kit and they refer you to a local lab of your choice for urine and/ or blood sample collection. Others you collect the samples yourself and mail it to a lab to be analyzed. These kits can be purchased in a pharmacy or online. Either option is very confidential (score!). If you get a positive result you will need to be referred to doctor or clinic to get your treatment though. That can be a downside, to testing at home.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR GIRLS UNDER 25 LIVING IN SAN DIEGO:

You can get a FREE home testing kit for chlamydia and gonorrhea! These are the two most common STDs and they don't always show symptoms. If you don't get them treated they can lead to serious side effects! Visit this website to learn more! <https://sandiego.dontthinkknow.org/index.html>