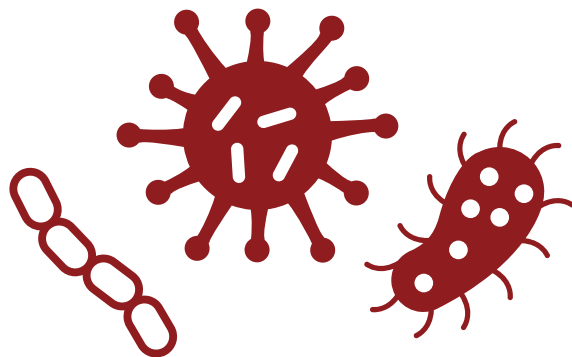


## What is a sexually transmitted infection (STI)?

Sexually transmitted infections are infections that spread through sexual activities. Anyone who is sexually active is at risk for STIs.



## What are the signs and symptoms of STIs?

Most STIs often have no symptoms, but they can still cause serious health problems, even without symptoms.

Even when people do experience symptoms, they are often mild and easily mistaken for something else.

If you do get symptoms, they may include: an unusual sore (which may or may not be painful), an unexplained rash, a smelly discharge, burning when peeing, or bleeding between periods.

If you notice any of these symptoms, contact your healthcare provider. You should also see a provider if your partner has an STI or symptoms of one.

If you are sexually active, testing for STIs and HIV on a regular basis is a good idea. Make sure your doctor tests all the places you have sex, because a urine test will not tell you if you have gonorrhea or chlamydia in your throat or anus (butt). You can also ask your doctor about PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis), a medication to prevent HIV infection.

## How are STIs transmitted?

You can get an STI by having vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who has STI. Some STIs, like HIV, can also be transmitted when sharing needles to inject drugs. Some STIs can pass from a pregnant person to their baby during pregnancy and childbirth.

STIs are typically not transmitted by: toilet seats, door knobs, swimming pools, hot tubs, bathtubs, sharing clothing, or eating utensils

Sources: Morano, L. (2021, August 9). Chemsex - resources. NEXT Distro. Retrieved March 8, 2023, from <https://nextdistro.org/resources-collection/tag/chemsex>; Marin, V. (2019, April 23). How to ask for enthusiastic consent. Lifehacker. Retrieved March 8, 2023, from <https://lifehacker.com/how-to-ask-for-enthusiastic-consent-1834048510>; GCN, I. (2020, February 1). Harm reduction when using GHB: Know the facts. GCN. Retrieved March 8, 2023, from <https://gcn.ie/harm-reduction-ghb/?fbclid=IwAR3NlnbnQDxsbXaNaGUQMRfK8xRm91TQaSepYzSY5a4RMbAbn4ZbUdU7>

**Get tested, get treated, stay safe! Talk with your provider or local Tribal health facility for more information about syphilis testing and treatment resources near you.**



## Drugs and Sexual Activities

*Anyone can get a sexually transmitted infection (STI). If you use drugs, you might be at greater risk.*



## Drugs and your sex life

Drugs can change your body's sexual response - making sex more or less intense or pleasurable. Drugs can also:

- Lower your inhibitions
- Affect your ability to consent and keep yourself safe
- Cause you to lose track of time, and forget to take medications like birth control, PrEP, and HIV medications
- Dehydrate you, which increases the risk of STIs due to more tearing and abrasions during sex.



## Using drugs and having sex (sometimes referred to as chemsex)

- **Poppers** – some people use poppers for anal sex (they relax the muscles around the anus), but they also expand blood vessels which can result in anal bleeding. This increases the risk of HIV and STIs. Using poppers with Viagra can be fatal due to a sudden drop in blood pressure.
- **GHB** – some people use this to relax during sex, especially anal sex. Mixing this with alcohol increases risk of overdose / losing consciousness. Sometimes this is given to people without them knowing, to facilitate sexual assault.
- **Cocaine and Methamphetamine** – these are stimulants (meaning they speed up your body and its functions) and many people will have sex for several hours without realizing how much time has passed.
- **Alcohol** – alcohol is also a drug, and can cause a person to “black out” but still be conscious during sex.
- **Ketamine** – too much ketamine can make it difficult for a person to consent or even move (K-hole), and can cause panic attacks. Mixing with GHB and/or alcohol can be fatal.
- **Ecstasy or Molly (MDMA)** – some people use this to increase feelings of intimacy and euphoria. MDMA can also cause the body to overheat, and it may have other drugs added to the pill such as meth or fentanyl. Mixing MDMA with stimulants is extremely dangerous and can be fatal.
- **Opioids** – generally prescribed as pain medications, opioids can produce feelings of euphoria. Overuse of opioids can cause breathing difficulties and can be fatal, especially if mixed with fentanyl.

## Harm reduction tips for people who use drugs and have sex

- Enthusiastic consent is important, and a person should be able to change their mind at any time.
- If you meet someone online or through an app, you can negotiate condom use, discuss HIV status, and discuss what you are willing to do before meeting.
- If you are meeting a new partner, let a friend know who you are meeting and where you are going.
- Bring your own condoms, lube, and other supplies with you. Even if you decide to not use condoms, using lube can prevent tearing and other injuries.
- Try to only have sex with people you know or trust while high.
- Stay hydrated and be mindful of overheating, take breaks if needed.
- Decide ahead of time what risks you are and are not willing to take. For example, unprotected oral sex is a lower risk than unprotected anal sex.
- Get vaccinated for hepatitis A and B.
- Carry naran and discuss overdose with your partner(s) so you can keep each other safe.
- Get on HIV PrEP or start PEP immediately after HIV exposure (within 72 hours).

## Contact Us

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**NORTHWEST PORTLAND AREA  
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*Indian Leadership for Indian Health*