



A Guide

~~~~~ to ~~~~~

# **Sexually Transmitted Infections**

2025

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# Background



STIs are **sexually transmitted infections**.

These infections are caused by bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi. STIs are generally transmitted when you have **sex without using proper protection**. Fortunately, you can take a number of protective precautions to ensure you enjoy your sex life to the fullest.

## **STIs can affect anybody**

Anybody can get an STI at some point in their life.

You can get an STI **at any age, if you have unprotected sex**. Regardless of gender, sexual orientation or ethnicity, STIs can affect anybody who is sexually active.

Most of the time, **STIs do not have any symptoms**, which is why it is important to **get checked regularly if you change partner**.

This tends to involve a simple blood test, urine sample, swab and/or visual check of your genitals.

If you are diagnosed with an STI, treatments are available. The quicker the infection is treated, the lower the risk of serious complications. When left untreated, STIs can lead to potentially serious medical problems, which may affect your fertility or your unborn child if you are pregnant.

TRANSMISSION

# How HIV & STIs are transmitted

- High risk
- Moderate risk
- Low risk
- Sex with blood-to-blood contact \*

|                          | Vaginal sex | Anal sex | Fellatio | Cunnilingus |
|--------------------------|-------------|----------|----------|-------------|
| HIV                      | ●           | ●        | ● **     | ●           |
| Hepatitis A              |             | ●        |          |             |
| Hepatitis B              | ●           | ●        | ●        | ●           |
| Hepatitis C              | ●           | ●        | ●        | ●           |
| Syphilis                 | ●           | ●        | ●        | ●           |
| Genital herpes           | ●           | ●        | ●        | ●           |
| Human papillomavirus *** | ●           | ●        | ●        | ●           |
| Chlamydia                | ●           | ●        | ●        | ●           |
| Gonorrhoea               | ●           | ●        | ●        | ●           |
| Trichomoniasis           | ●           | ●        | ●        | ●           |

Mpox: the risk of transmission is high in the event of contact with a skin lesion.

2

**Do not hesitate to speak about this with your doctor.  
If you are sharing sex toys, use a condom.**

- \* During unprotected sex and/or sex involving trauma with the presence of blood (anal or vaginal intercourse, fisting, menstruation, cuts, etc.).
- \*\* The risk is low for the person performing fellatio if semen enters their mouth and they have cuts on the inside of their mouth.
- \*\*\* Human papillomavirus (HPV)
- \*\*\*\* The risk is high if left untreated. If treatment is carried out correctly and the child is not breastfed, the risk falls to nearly zero.

| Anilingus | Sexual touching | Kissing | Sharing syringes | Snorting drugs | Mother-to-child |
|-----------|-----------------|---------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| ●         |                 |         | ●                |                | ● ****          |
| ●         |                 |         | ●                |                |                 |
| ●         | ●               | ●       | ●                | ●              | ●               |
| ●         | ●               |         | ●                | ●              | ●               |
| ●         | ●               | ●       | ●                |                | ●               |
| ●         | ●               | ●       | ●                |                | ●               |
| ●         | ●               |         | ●                |                | ●               |
| ●         | ●               |         | ●                |                | ●               |
| ●         | ●               |         | ●                |                | ●               |
| ●         | ●               |         | ●                |                | ●               |

sources: O'Yes / Ministère de la Santé

TESTING

# Timeframes for STIs testing

- Exposure
- Testing methods available (see p.24)
- Blood test
- Quick test / self-test

|                         | Exposure | 7 days | 10 days | 2 weeks |
|-------------------------|----------|--------|---------|---------|
| HIV                     |          |        |         |         |
| Hepatitis A             |          |        |         |         |
| Hepatitis B             |          |        |         |         |
| Hepatitis C             |          |        |         |         |
| Syphilis                |          |        |         |         |
| Genital herpes *        |          |        |         |         |
| Human papillomavirus ** |          |        |         |         |
| Chlamydia               |          |        |         |         |
| Gonorrhoea              |          |        |         |         |
| Trichomoniasis          |          |        |         |         |

NB: In the case of Mpox, a person is contagious for as long as the lesions remain and until the scabs have fallen off. This can last up to 3 weeks.

It is important to get tested if you think you may have been exposed to infection. However, not all STIs can be detected quickly.

A full set of tests can be carried out 6 weeks after possible exposure. Your doctor may recommend that you get tested sooner (for HIV) and/or later (for hepatitis). It can take several days, or even weeks to detect all infections. It is a good idea to get tested regularly.

3

**Please note: this advice can vary from person to person. If you notice something unusual, you should not wait! Talk to a doctor for a check-up and, if necessary, get you tested and treated.**

\* Genital herpes - see p.17 | \*\* Human papillomavirus (HPV) - see p.16

[illegible]

# How to avoid getting an STI

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are avoidable, and treatments do exist. There are some simple things you can do to avoid getting them and stop passing them on.

1

Use a condom when you have sex and with every new partner you have.

2

Get tested regularly for STIs and HIV if you often change partners.

3

Get tested for STIs and HIV if you want to stop using a condom with a regular partner.

4

Ask your regular partner to get tested for STIs and HIV if you want to stop using a condom with them.

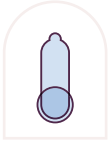
5

Always complete the full course of treatment prescribed by your doctor.

6

Let your partner(s) know so that they can also get tested and treated if necessary.

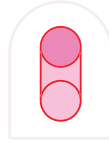
## Using protection: what are the options?



### EXTERNAL CONDOM

Limits contamination during oral sex and/or intercourse.

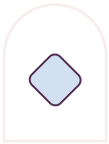
Previously known as a male condom.



### INTERNAL CONDOM

Limits contamination during intercourse.

Previously known as a female condom.



### DENTAL DAM

Limits contamination during contact between the mouth and vulva or anus.



### LATEX GLOVES

Limits contamination during contact between hands and genitals or anus.

## Do It Yourself: a dental dam

1



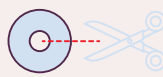
Open the condom.

2



Cut off the tip to ensure that there is an opening at both ends.

3



Cut it lengthways. It is easier to keep it rolled up when you do this.

=



Unroll the condom before using it.

# Useful info

5

There are vaccinations that can be given against the following STIs:

**Hepatitis A    Hepatitis B    HPV/Human papillomavirus**

## HIV RDT: what is it?

Have you heard of quick tests known as RDTs (rapid diagnostic tests)?

Using a drop of blood, this test can tell you whether you are infected with HIV in just a few minutes. The RDT needs to be carried out at least 12 weeks after the possible exposure.

A reactive ('positive') result needs to be confirmed by a further, **more specific blood test**. These quick tests or RDTs are carried out anonymously, **free of charge, and without requiring an appointment**:

HIV Berodung  
of the Luxembourg  
Red Cross

94 bvd Général Patton  
L-2316 Luxembourg

Mondays &  
Wednesdays  
17:00-19:00

Centre  
LGBTIQ+CIGALE

16 rue Notre Dame  
L-2240 Luxembourg

Thursday  
12:30-14:30

DIMPS - Mobile HIV  
Testing

This mobile unit can visit  
communities with the aim  
of expanding the reach of  
anonymous free testing.

The location and times of  
the DIMPS mobile unit can  
be found at [www.dimps.lu](http://www.dimps.lu)

## Preventative treatment for HIV:

**PrEP** (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is a preventative treatment that involves taking medication to avoid infection. It enables people who do not have HIV from contracting it. If the treatment is taken correctly, the risk of infection is minimal. In Luxembourg, **PrEP** is available with a medical prescription from an infectious disease specialist at the National Infectious Disease Service (Service national des maladies infectieuses) and is reimbursed by the National Health Fund (Caisse nationale de santé/CNS) if prescribed by a specialised doctor.

There is a website dedicated to this subject providing all the information you might need: [www.prep.lu](http://www.prep.lu).

**It is very important to remember that PrEP is effective against HIV but does not protect you against other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).**

## Other preventative measures against HIV:

- Using a condom, whether external or internal, protects you from HIV and other STIs, as well as preventing unwanted pregnancies;
- HIV testing is the only way of finding out your HIV status, and can therefore help to prevent contamination by ensuring the infection is treated correctly;
- PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis or post-exposure treatment (PET)), also known as emergency treatment, is effective in significantly reducing the risk of HIV infection if taken within no more than 72 hours after possible exposure to infection. It is intended in the event of non-consensual sex, for example, and can be prescribed confidentially.

**6**

# **The main Sexually Transmitted Infections**

**SEE  
GLOSSARY  
ON  
P.28**

# Chlamydia



## \* SYMPTOMS

Women usually experience no symptoms, while men usually do. When symptoms are present, both men and women experience pain when urinating, as well as pain in the lower abdomen, throat and anus. They may experience unusual discharge from the genitals and unusual bleeding.

## \* CONSEQUENCES

Serious infections, sterility.

## \* TESTING

Vaginal, urethral, anal and/or throat swab and/or urine sample.

## \* TREATMENT

Antibiotics.

## \* DISTINCTIVE FEATURE

No symptoms in 70% of cases. You can be re-infected, even after treatment and elimination of the infection. There are various types of chlamydia, some of which are more virulent than others, such as lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV). The symptoms of this strain are sometimes different from those usually associated with chlamydia. LGV can have serious consequences if left untreated, such as ulcers, swollen genitals and abnormal shrinking of the anus.

## \* PROTECTION

External or internal condom, dental dam.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is advisable to get tested regularly, even if you don't have any symptoms.

# Gonorrhoea

CLAP



\* **SYMPTOMS**

Women usually experience no symptoms, while men usually do. Symptoms include unusual discharge (from the penis or vagina), irritation of the penis or vulva, pain in the lower abdomen, a burning sensation when urinating and pain in the throat and anus (often accompanied by fluid discharge).

\* **CONSEQUENCES**

Sterility.

\* **TESTING**

Vaginal, urethral, anal and/or throat swab and/or urine sample.

\* **TREATMENT**

Antibiotics.

\* **DISTINCTIVE FEATURE**

You can be re-infected, even after treatment and elimination of the infection.

\* **PROTECTION**

External or internal condom, dental dam.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is advisable to get tested regularly, even if you don't have any symptoms.

# Syphilis



## \* SYMPTOMS

Mouth, genital or anal ulcers at an early stage of infection (can go unnoticed) and mild rash in some cases. Skin rash with fever at secondary stage.

## \* CONSEQUENCES

Develops over a number of years through several stages and complications can be fatal if the infection goes untreated. Joint, cardiac and neurological complications may arise at an advanced stage of infection.

## \* TESTING

Blood test and clinical examination. RDT possible but only to detect an initial infection.

## \* TREATMENT

Antibiotics.

## \* DISTINCTIVE FEATURE

The symptoms may disappear even though the infection remains.

## \* PROTECTION

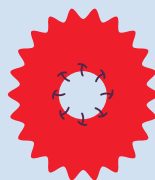
Internal or external condoms, and dental dams reduce the risk of exposure but do not provide complete protection because ulcers may be on other parts of the body.

## RECOMMENDATION

Get tested twice a year if you have several partners over the course of the year.

# **HUMAN PAPILLOMA- VIRUS**

**HPV VIRUS**



★ **SYMPTOMS**

There are usually no symptoms. However, there may be irritation and itching caused by warts (known as condyloma) that may appear. Some types of HPV can cause cancer, particularly cervical cancer, but also anal, vulval and throat cancer. Cancer can also be triggered in men. The first signs are pre-cancerous lesions, which are often asymptomatic and can be detected by a smear test for cervical cancer (cervical smear). These pre-cancerous lesions heal by themselves in most cases, but can develop into cancer. If pre-cancerous lesions are detected, monitoring by a gynaecologist is necessary.

★ **CONSEQUENCES**

It depends on the type of virus. There is a vaccine that is effective against ten or so strains of the virus, which cause most of the cancer types mentioned above.

★ **TESTING**

Medical examination for warts and smear test for pre-cancerous lesions.

★ **TREATMENT**

Removal of warts (cream, liquid nitrogen, acid, laser treatment, etc.). The pre-cancerous lesions in the cervix are monitored and removed depending on their development.

★ **DISTINCTIVE FEATURE**

Very easily transmitted. Most humans will be infected at least once in their lifetime. The virus is not only transmitted through sex, but also through contact with infected mucus membranes.

The virus is often eliminated naturally by the body within 1 to 3 years. Symptoms can first appear months or even years after the initial infection.

★ **PROTECTION**

The vaccination is highly recommended for everybody. Condoms and dental dams can reduce the risk of exposure to HPV but do not provide complete protection because they do not cover the entire genital area.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is advisable to have a cervical smear test (costs reimbursed) every year or in the event of lesions. If a person has anal sex regularly, an examination by a proctologist is recommended every two years. The HPV vaccination is recommended from the age of 9.

# Herpes



## \* SYMPTOMS

Outbreaks of lesions/spots. Very painful upon initial infection.

## \* CONSEQUENCES

Repeat outbreaks of varying frequency and severity. Impact on personal life and sex life. Very high infection risk for newborns when there is an active infection during childbirth.

## \* TESTING

Medical examination if symptoms are visible and a swab.

## \* TREATMENT

An anti-viral treatment is available to prevent outbreaks.

## \* DISTINCTIVE FEATURE

Once someone is infected, the virus is often eliminated within 3 years. However, for some people, the virus can be present for longer.

## \* PROTECTION

Condoms and dental dams can reduce the risk of exposure but do not provide complete protection. Avoid touching the lesions/spots.

## RECOMMENDATION

If you are infected with herpes before or during pregnancy, you should speak to a gynaecologist to prevent the baby from being infected during childbirth.

# HEPATITIS

## VIRUS



There are



three different forms

They affect



the liver

## HEPATITIS A

### \* SYMPTOMS

There are usually no symptoms. If symptoms are present during the acute phase these include fever, nausea, muscle or abdominal pain, or jaundice and discoloured stools.

### \* CONSEQUENCES

In most cases, the infection gets better by itself.

### \* TESTING

Blood test.

### \* TREATMENT

There are usually no consequences because the infection heals spontaneously. However, there are treatments for relieving symptoms.

### \* PROTECTION

A vaccine is available. Avoid infection via the faecal-oral route (dental dam for anilingus, washing hands after using the toilet).

### RECOMMENDATION

Maintain good personal hygiene, wash your hands before and after meals, and every time you go to the toilet. Do not share your toiletries with others.

## HEPATITIS B

### \* SYMPTOMS

There are usually no symptoms. If symptoms are present during the acute phase these include fever, nausea, muscle or abdominal pain, or jaundice. In cases of chronic hepatitis B, recurrent fatigue may also be experienced.

### \* CONSEQUENCES

There are usually no consequences because the infection heals spontaneously. However, chronic hepatitis B can develop into liver disease, cirrhosis or cancer and can be fatal.

### \* TESTING

Blood test.

### \* TREATMENT

In the case of chronic hepatitis B, an antiviral treatment can be taken orally.

### \* PROTECTION

There is a vaccine offered to all children for free. Internal or external condom and dental dam.

### RECOMMENDATION

Use single-use sterile equipment for tattooing, piercings, injections or snorting drugs. Do not share toiletries.

## HEPATITIS C

### \* SYMPTOMS

There are usually no symptoms. If symptoms are present during the acute phase these include fever, nausea, muscle or abdominal pain, or jaundice.

### \* CONSEQUENCES

There are usually no consequences because the infection heals spontaneously in most cases. However, chronic hepatitis C can lead to liver disease, cirrhosis and cancer and can be fatal.

### \* TESTING

Blood test and RDT.

### \* TREATMENT

Antivirals taken orally for 2 to 3 months, which help to get rid of the virus. They are available for anybody with chronic hepatitis C.

### \* PROTECTION

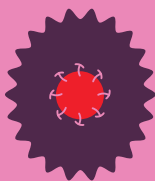
External or internal condoms and dental dams. Use sterile, single-use straws/ syringes.

### RECOMMENDATION

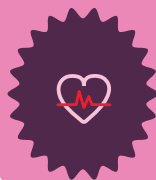
Avoid contact between your blood and infected blood (open wound, injection). Tattoos and piercings must be done using sterilised, single-use equipment. Never share your injecting or snorting equipment (e.g. do not use bank notes), or your toiletries (e.g. razors, nail clippers, toothbrush). The hepatitis C virus is transmitted through the blood, including sex where blood is present.

# HIV

HIV VIRUS

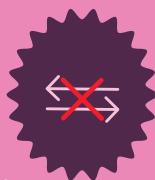


Once infected,



you carry it for life

You can have it



without passing it on

### \* SYMPTOMS

There are usually no symptoms. However, symptoms similar to the flu may appear after infection (fever, fatigue, swollen glands, etc.). They appear in the weeks following infection.

### \* CONSEQUENCES

If left untreated: so-called opportunistic diseases appear (tuberculosis, pneumonia, meningitis, toxoplasmosis, etc.).

### \* TESTING

Blood test and rapid diagnosis test available (RDT and self-test).

### \* TREATMENT

Prescribed treatment can halt the development of the virus and prevent the appearance of various infections but cannot eliminate the virus entirely.

### \* DISTINCTIVE FEATURE

If a person is HIV-positive, is taking treatment and has an undetectable viral load, they can no longer pass on the virus through sex.

### \* PROTECTION

External or internal condom and dental dam. Avoid contact between contaminated fluids (blood, pre-ejaculate, sperm, vaginal discharge, mother's milk) and an open wound or mucus membrane. Preventive treatment (PrEP) and emergency treatment in the event of exposure (PEP).

### RECOMMENDATION

The average time period between infection and testing is 3 years. Remember to get yourself tested.

# Trichomoniasis



## \* SYMPTOMS

Foul-smelling, coloured discharge, itching, burning sensation when urinating. Common symptoms in women (80% of cases) but no symptoms for men in 90% of cases.

## \* CONSEQUENCES

Premature childbirth. Having an STI increases the risk of being infected by HIV due to the lesions they cause.

## \* TESTING

Vaginal or urethral swab, urine sample if symptoms are visible.

## \* TREATMENT

Antibiotics.

## \* PROTECTION

External or internal condom.

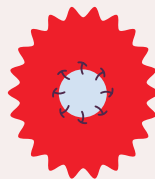
## RECOMMENDATION

Testing is not systematic in this case and is only done according to the symptoms.

# Monkeypox

MPOX / MPXV / hMPVX

MPV VIRUS



## \* SYMPTOMS

Painful swelling of lymph nodes, isolated or sparse pus-filled lesions, fever, painful swelling of the rectum, pain or difficulty urinating. Occasional isolated ulcers.

## \* CONSEQUENCES

In very rare cases, encephalitis and death.

## \* TESTING

Swab of lesions.

## \* TREATMENT

Treatment of symptoms.

## \* PROTECTION

The vaccination against smallpox may also protect people from Mpox and is offered for men who have sex with men. Internal or external condoms and dental dams offer partial protection depending on where the lesions are on the body.

## Others

## \* FUNGAL INFECTIONS

(CANDIDIASIS CAUSED BY CANDIDA

ALBICANS) also affect the genitals and lead to unpleasant itching and vaginal discharge. This fungus is part of the normal genital flora, in balance with various other types of bacteria. If a person has sex frequently, has other infections or is taking antibiotics, the flora can become imbalanced with an excess of Candida fungus, leading to the symptoms above. Speak to your doctor if you have any questions about this.

## \* SCABIES AND PUBIC LICE

can also be spread by sexual contact. They do not generally have any serious consequences but can become extremely irritating.

## To find out more

To find out more about STIs, see the below links:



### SAFER SEX



[safersex.lu](http://safersex.lu)

### CONTRACEPTION



[macontraception.lu](http://macontraception.lu)

### HEALTH



[santesecu.lu](http://santesecu.lu)

### CESAS



[cesas.lu](http://cesas.lu)

### FAMILY PLANNING



[pfl.lu](http://pfl.lu)

### RED CROSS



[croix-rouge.lu](http://croix-rouge.lu)

## If in doubt, contact:

### NATIONAL INFECTIOUS DISEASE SERVICE

T. 4411 8348

### CENTRE HOSPITALIER DE LUXEMBOURG

4, RUE ERNEST BARBLÉ  
L- 1210 LUXEMBOURG

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## For advice or queries about HIV, contact:

### HIV BERODUNG DE LA CROIX-ROUGE LUXEMBOURGEOISE

T. 2755 4500  
[WWW.AIDS.LU](http://WWW.AIDS.LU)

See “useful addresses” on  
page 26.

## TESTING

# How to get tested



To test for all STIs, a simple blood test is not enough. Other tests need to be carried out (swabs, clinical examinations and urine samples) to detect STIs like chlamydia, gonorrhoea or HPV, which are among the most common infections among young people.

While waiting to get tested and to prevent any infections, you should always take preventative measures (condoms) and protect your partner(s).

If you want to stop using condoms in your relationship, you should both get tested for all STIs.

If the tests come back negative and you are in an exclusive relationship, you can stop using a condom.

**If necessary, you can choose from among the contraception options available**

**[www.macontraception.lu](http://www.macontraception.lu)**

# Types of testing for different STIs

If there are clinical signs of infection, it is important to confirm the infection through an additional test.

|                      | BLOOD SAMPLE |            | MEDICAL EXAMINATION |                     |              |
|----------------------|--------------|------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|
|                      | Blood test   | Rapid test | Clinical signs      | Sample (swab, etc.) | Urine sample |
| HIV                  | ●            | ●          |                     |                     |              |
| Hepatitis A          | ●            |            |                     |                     |              |
| Hepatitis B          | ●            |            |                     |                     |              |
| Hepatitis C          | ●            | ●          |                     |                     |              |
| Syphilis             | ●            | ●          | ●                   |                     |              |
| Genital herpes       |              |            | ●                   |                     |              |
| Human papillomavirus |              |            | ●                   | ●                   |              |
| Chlamydia            |              |            | ●                   | ●                   | ●            |
| Gonorrhoea           |              |            | ●                   | ●                   | ●            |
| Trichomoniasis       |              |            | ●                   | ●                   |              |
| Monkeypox            |              |            |                     | ●                   |              |

# Where to get tested

9

## Quick, free and anonymous testing

HIV Berodung  
of the Luxembourg  
Red Cross

94 bvd Général Patton  
L-2316 Luxembourg

Mondays &  
Wednesdays  
17:00-19:00

T. 2755 4500  
hivberodung@  
croix-rouge.lu

Centre  
LGBTIQ+CIGALE

16 rue Notre Dame  
L-2240 Luxembourg

Thursday  
12:30-14:30

T. 26190018

DIMPS - Mobile HIV  
Testing

This mobile unit can visit  
communities with the aim  
of expanding the reach of  
anonymous free testing.

The location and times of  
the DIMPS mobile unit can  
be found at [www.dimps.lu](http://www.dimps.lu)

## For a free and anonymous blood test without a prescription

Centre Hospitalier  
de Luxembourg

Unit 20-Infectious  
diseases

Open 24/7

Laboratoire national  
de Santé

Monday-Friday  
7:30-16:00

Centre Hospitalier  
Emile Mayrisch

Monday-Friday  
7:00-17:00

## Testing locations with a medical prescription (not anonymous)

Laboratoires  
Ketterthill

T. 488 288 1

[www.ketterthill.lu](http://www.ketterthill.lu)

Centres  
Picken Doheem

T. 8002 4040

[www.pickendoheem.lu](http://www.pickendoheem.lu)

Laboratoires  
Bionext LAB

T. 285 777-1

[www.bionext.lu](http://www.bionext.lu)

Laboratoires Réunis

T. 78 02 90 1

[www.labo.lu](http://www.labo.lu)

# Glossary



## A

### \* ANILINGUS

Sexual practice in which a person stimulates their partner's anus with their mouth.

### \* ANTIVIRALS

Antivirals are treatments that fight viruses. As a result, they are used in the event of viral infection.

## B

### \* BACTERIA

Microscopic living organisms, a minority of which are known as pathogens that can cause illnesses. In some cases, these can be treated by antibiotics.

## C

### \* CIRRHOSIS

Liver disease in which the liver cells are modified and fail to work correctly.

### \* CONDYLOMA

Genital warts symptomatic of a HPV infection.

### \* CUNNILINGUS

Oral sex practice involving the stimulation of the vulva with the mouth.

## D

### \* DENTAL DAM

Made of latex or polyurethane, placed between the mouth and the vulva/anus to prevent some STIs.

## E

### \* EXPOSURE

Exposure may involve having unprotected sex (with or without penetration), sharing a used syringe or equipment for snorting drugs, contact with a lesion, etc.

## F

### \* FELLATIO

Oral sex practice involving the stimulation of the penis by the mouth.

### \* FISTING

Fisting is a sex practice involving the penetration of the vagina or rectum with the fist/hand.

## L

### \* LESION

Damage to a cell, tissue or an organ (wound, injury, etc.).

### \* LGV

Lymphogranuloma Venereum, also known as Nicolas-Favre disease. Malign and extremely virulent form of chlamydia.

# M

## \* **MONKEYPOX**

Monkeypox is an illness caused by a virus from the human smallpox family, which emerged gradually after smallpox was eradicated in humans.

## \* **MUCUS MEMBRANES**

Membranes lining some openings in the body (eye, mouth, nose, anus, inside the vulva, vagina, head of the penis). Thinner, more fragile and permeable than skin, they are constantly warm and humid. They serve as an entry point for STIs.

# P

## \* **PET**

Post-Exposure Treatment. This is an emergency treatment intended to prevent HIV infection after possible exposure.

## \* **PEP**

Post-Exposure Prophylaxis: emergency treatment taken after a high-risk situation for HIV transmission (condom breaks, slips off or is not used, injury or cut with an object stained with blood or semen, sharing equipment for injecting drugs), or non-consensual sex.

## \* **PREP**

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis: a HIV prevention strategy. HIV prevention medication, intended for people whose practices put them at risk of contracting the virus. Requires medical monitoring.

# R

## \* **RDТ**

Rapid Diagnostic Testing. In the case of HIV, it involves taking a droplet of blood from the finger and combining it with reactive products. This test can be carried out 3 months after possible exposure. In the event of a reactive (positive) result, this needs to be confirmed by an additional blood test.

# S

## \* **SEMINAL FLUID**

Pre-ejaculate fluid. A natural lubricant of the penis, which can contain spermatozoa or bacteria/viruses. It is present as soon as the penis is erect and is a fluid that can transmit STIs.

## \* **SWAB**

Test in which a sample of cells is taken from the throat, urethra, anus, vagina or cervix.

## \* **SYMPTOMS**

Signs or indications of an illness.

# U

## \* **ULCER**

Sunken and painless abscess or wound on the skin or mucus membrane.

# V

## \* **VESICLE**

In the case of genital herpes: small blisters containing highly contagious fluid.

## \* **VIRUS**

Microscopic living organism, smaller than bacteria, which infects human cells and can cause illnesses.

## \* **VULVA**

External female genital organs (clitoris, internal and external labia, urinary and vaginal orifice).

# In short



- \* Anybody can get an STI in their lifetime, regardless of their romantic relationships and sexual practices.
- \* Sexual touching, cunnilingus, anilingus, fellatio, and vaginal and anal penetration are all exposure risks.
- \* Most STIs do not have any symptoms.
- \* Sharing equipment for injecting or snorting drugs can spread STIs.

## **TO ENJOY YOUR SEXUAL LIFE TO THE FULLEST, REMEMBER TO:**

- \* Make sure you have consent from the other person.
- \* Get vaccinated against HPV, hepatitis A & B, and MPox if you are at risk.
- \* Protect yourself (condoms, testing, treatment).
- \* Get tested whenever you change your partner and whenever you experience an exposure risk.
- \* Enjoy yourself and give pleasure to others!

# Our partners

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Sources:



The publication is an adapted version of *Le petit guide des IST*, Ed. 2019 O'YES and Ex Æquo. O'YES is a Belgian organisation working to prevent illness and promote a healthy lifestyle.

Luxembourg. Ministry of Health and Social Security. « Infections sexuellement transmissibles » (réf. du 18.02.2022).

Available at [santesecu.lu](https://santesecu.lu): <https://santesecu.public.lu/fr/espace-citoyen/dossiers-thematiques/i/infections-sexuellement-transmissibles.html>

ISBN 978-2-49676-067-5



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