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# OUT

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# HIV, Hepatitis, and STBBI's

An OUTSaskatoon Resource

# HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus

## Definitions

*Sexually Transmittable and blood-borne infections (STBBIs):* Infections such as chlamydia, HIV, and hepatitis C which are passed through sexual activity and blood to blood contact.

*Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV):* a virus that attacks the immune system, your body's natural defense against disease. Both the virus and the infection it causes are called HIV. If you have HIV and do not receive treatment, the infection can lead to AIDS. However, being infected with HIV does not mean that you have AIDS. If you receive treatment for HIV, the damage to your immune system can be slowed down or stopped, thus significantly decreasing your risk of developing AIDS.

*Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS):* the final stage of HIV infection—not everyone with HIV advances to this stage. An AIDS diagnosis occurs when your immune system is badly damaged and you become vulnerable to other infections.

*Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP):* A set of anti-HIV medications that HIV-negative people can take after coming into contact with HIV in order to reduce risk of infection.

*Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP):* an oral pill that HIV-negative people can take daily in order to reduce their risk of HIV infection.

## How is HIV spread?

- HIV is passed through blood, semen, rectal and vaginal fluids, and breastmilk
- In order to become HIV positive, the virus must be present in a fluid (listed above) and then enter the other person's bloodstream and begin reproducing.
- New HIV infections can occur during condomless anal and vaginal sex, and sometimes through small tears inside the anus, the vaginal canal, or on the penis.
- The highest risk for the spread of HIV in Saskatchewan is through sharing needles for such things as injection drug use. Sharing needles for steroid or hormone use can also spread HIV, as can other drug equipment that has blood on it (eg. spoons, filters, drug pipes, straws, etc.) and by sharing equipment when getting a tattoo or body piercing.
- HIV only lives a few minutes outside the body, except in the barrel of a needle where it could possibly live for hours or days.

## What are the symptoms of HIV?

- Some people who have been infected with HIV report flu-like symptoms

# STBI Transmission Chart

(From <http://checkhimout.ca/testing/about-hiv-stis/>)

SEXUAL ACTIVITIES	HIV	Chlamydia	Herpes	Gonorrhea	Hepatitis A	Hepatitis B	Hepatitis C	HPV / Genital Warts	Syphilis
Kissing / Spit Swapping		●			●				
Hand Job / Mutual Masturbation		●					●	●	
Body Contact / Naked Grinding		●					●	●	
Oral Sex	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
Rimming			●		●		●	●	
Anal Sex	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●

## HIV/STBI Testing in Saskatoon

### OUTSaskatoon: Queer & Ally Testing Clinic

Thursday 5:00-8:00 PM (Appointment & Drop-ins Welcome)

Phone: 306-665-1224 or 1-800-357-1833

320—21st Street West (Top Floor—Habitat Centre)

### Sexual Health Centre Saskatoon

#301, 115 2nd Ave N. Phone: 306-244-7989

Tuesday, Appointments 12:00-2:00 PM Drop-ins 3:00-5:00 PM

Wednesday, Drop-ins 7:00-9:00 PM

Thursday, Appointments 12:00-2:30 PM

Friday, Appointments 9:00-12:00

Saturday, Appointments 10:00-12:00 & Drop-ins 12:00-2:00 PM

### Saskatoon Sexual Health Clinic

101-310 Idylwyld Drive North Phone: 306-655-4642

Monday and Friday: Drop-in from 1-4pm

Wednesday and Thursday: Drop-in from 3-6pm

- If you've been exposed to genital herpes, it'll take up to 14 days to experience your first outbreak. Sometimes symptoms won't show up for months or even years, making it hard to figure out when the infection happened.
- If you have an impaired immune system, genital herpes can be more severe.
- Herpes infection can occur in other areas of your body, such as in your eyes and inside your anus. In rare cases, herpes can cause *meningitis* or *encephalitis* (brain inflammation).

### How do I test for genital herpes?

Be honest with your health care professional about your sexual history and symptoms, and ask for a physical exam. Without a sore, a test can be difficult. If you have a sore, a sample may be sent for testing. In some cases it may require a blood test.

### How do I protect myself from genital herpes?

- Condoms, gloves, and dental dams can reduce the spread of herpes. Prevention is never 100%; latex barriers protect only a portion of the penis or anus.
- Don't kiss, have anal sex, vaginal sex, or oral sex if you have symptoms or are being treated for herpes.
- Don't kiss, have anal sex, or have oral sex with anyone who has symptoms or who may have recently been exposed.
- You can also reduce your chances of picking up or passing on herpes by limiting your number of sexual partners and practicing safer sex.

### Herpes and HIV

- Having any STBI or engaging in sexual activities with someone who has an STI will increase your risk of picking up HIV.
- Herpes causes open sores. Open sores make it easier for HIV to be passed on. Even without open sores, areas where previous outbreaks have occurred may still be especially vulnerable to HIV transmission.
- If you already have HIV, active herpes may increase your viral load, increasing the chances you'll pass HIV on to others.
- Regular use of condoms, gloves, and dental dams will reduce the risk of picking up or passing on herpes and HIV.

including nausea, vomiting, night sweats, swollen glands, fever, and skin rashes. These may occur about 10 to 14 days after being infected, lasting for one or two weeks. **Many people have no symptoms. Getting a blood test for HIV is the only way to really find out if you have HIV.**

- During the first few months following infection, the HIV virus is rapidly reproducing, making the individual much more likely to pass it on.
- After the first few months of HIV infection, the body begins producing HIV antibodies to help fight the virus and the viral load decreases. However, HIV cannot be completely eliminated from the body.
- There is no cure for HIV, but many people take HIV medication to slow down the virus. If medication is taken properly, it is possible to attain an "undetectable" viral load. This means that the amount of HIV in a person's bloodstream cannot be detected by standard load tests and that their chances of transmitting HIV is much lower.

### How do you test for HIV?

Currently, there are two ways to test for HIV in Saskatchewan — the Rapid (Point of Care) HIV test, which gives results in 60 seconds and through a blood draw that takes two weeks to get results. See the back page of this pamphlet for more information on testing sites in Saskatoon.

### How do I protect myself?

- Regular use of condoms, gloves, and dental dams will greatly reduce the chances of getting HIV and other STBIs. Having other STBIs or engaging in sexual activity with someone who has other STBIs increases the chances of contracting HIV.
- HIV is often passed along by people who don't know they have HIV. Thus, limiting the number of different sexual partners you have will also reduce your risk. Always get tested regularly and use safe sex practices.
- Don't share needles or other drug equipment when injecting drugs, steroids, or hormones, or when smoking or snorting drugs.
- If you are getting a tattoo or a piercing, make sure that the business you are going to follows health and safety standards.
- If you think you've been exposed to HIV, you have to wait a minimum of six weeks to get tested. The test looks for HIV antibodies in the blood, which take 6-12 weeks to show up.
- You can take PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) after an actual or suspected exposure to HIV. PEP must be administered within 72 hours and must be taken every day for four weeks. PEP starter kits are provided by The Saskatchewan

Ministry of Health and are available at a variety of health facilities in Saskatchewan.

- If your sexual partner is HIV positive or you are at a high risk for contracting HIV from injection drug use you may be eligible for PrEP. PrEP is a daily medication that lowers your chance of getting infected, and was approved for use in Canada in February of 2016.

## Hepatitis A

*Hepatitis A* is a virus that causes liver inflammation. After a brief illness, most people get better on their own.

### How is Hepatitis A spread?

- Hepatitis A is passed through the feces of an infected person.
- The most common way to contract hep A is from eating food or drinking water that has been contaminated with the feces of an infected person.
- Hepatitis A can be passed from performing anilingus (or rimming) on an individual who has been infected.

### What are the symptoms of Hepatitis A?

- Symptoms usually develop within two to eight weeks following infection. Sometimes symptoms are very mild and many people don't realize that they have the virus. Such symptoms may include a general flu-like feeling with a loss of appetite, fever, nausea, and vomiting. Symptoms can also include dark-coloured urine, clay-coloured feces, yellow skin and/or eyes, and tenderness on your right side below your ribs.
- Symptoms might last from two weeks to several months, but you will recover. After recovering from Hepatitis A, you will be immune to reinfection but you can still get infected with other hepatitis viruses like Hepatitis B or C.

### How do you test for Hepatitis A?

Be honest with a health care professional about your sexual history and your symptoms. You may be asked to have a blood test to confirm the presence of Hepatitis A antibodies.

### How do I protect myself?

- There is an effective vaccine that will prevent infection
- Share a shower or suggest one to your partner before you engage in anilingus.

also reduce your risk.

- Don't engage in sexual activity with a person if they have symptoms or if they are being treated for syphilis.

### Syphilis and HIV

- Having any STBBI or engaging in sexual activity with someone who has an STBBI will increase your risk of picking up HIV.
- If you already have HIV, having syphilis may increase your viral load, increasing the chances that you'll pass HIV on to others.
- HIV-positive people are prone to picking up or passing on syphilis during unprotected sexual activity with other HIV-positive people.
- Regular use of condoms, gloves, and dental dams will reduce the risk of picking up or passing on both syphilis and HIV.

## Genital Herpes

Herpes is a viral infection caused by two strains of the herpes simplex virus: type 1 (HSV-1) or type 2 (HSV-2). Type 1 is usually associated with cold sores on or around the mouth. Genital herpes is usually caused by type 2.

### How is genital herpes spread and what are the symptoms?

- Herpes is an infection spread by kissing, oral sex, vaginal sex, or anal sex with a partner who has a herpes infection.
- Herpes is most transmissible during cold sore or blister flare-ups, but the virus can still be spread if these symptoms aren't present.
- Genital herpes can be transmitted by receiving oral sex from a person with a cold sore. Genital herpes can also be transmitted by giving oral sex to a person with genital herpes.
- Symptoms vary from person to person. You might never have symptoms or the symptoms might be so mild that you don't know you have the virus.
- You might get itchy, painful blisters on your penis, testicles, vagina, or anus. The blisters will eventually rupture and turn into oozing, shallow sores that take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks to heal.
- After the first outbreak of blisters, the virus moves into the nerve cells and becomes inactive. It springs to life every once in a while, and then travels down the same nerve causing another outbreak of sores. Being stressed, run-down, sick, or sunburned can trigger an outbreak. Eventually, the sores happen less often, heal faster, and don't hurt as much.

might think you are experiencing a different health issue.

Primary stage:

- This stage usually starts within days or weeks after you've been infected. At this point, you may notice a painless open sore on the body part that has been in contact with the infection.
- The infection is passed to other people through direct contact with the sore. The sore will heal after a few weeks, but even though it goes away, you still have syphilis.
- Some people do not notice any sores.

Secondary stage:

- About four to ten weeks after infection, you might develop a rash on your chest, on the palms of your hands, or on the soles of your feet. General aches and pains or fever may also occur. The infection is passed to other people through direct genital contact with the rash or mucous membranes (inside of mouth, vagina, and anus).

Latent stage:

- Often referred to as the hidden stage, the latent stage of syphilis occurs about a year after infection. While no symptoms may be present, you still have syphilis and you can still easily pass it on to other people.

Latent (tertiary) stage:

- Left untreated, the bacteria can cause serious health concerns including blindness, mental illness, problems with the heart and nervous system, and even death.

## How do you test for syphilis?

Be honest with a health care professional about your sexual history and symptoms; ask for a physical exam. If you have a sore, fluid may be collected from it. Whether or not you have a sore, a blood test will confirm the diagnosis.

## How do I protect myself?

- Syphilis is often passed along by people who don't have symptoms and who don't know they are infected.
- If you think you've been exposed to syphilis, get tested. If you have numerous partners, get tested regularly.
- Limiting the number of different people you engage in sexual activity with will

- Avoid drinking water that could be contaminated with fecal matter, especially when you are travelling in other countries. Avoid eating fruits or vegetables that have been washed in contaminated water.

# Hepatitis B

*Hepatitis B* is a virus that causes liver inflammation. Most people infected with Hepatitis B will get a mild case and will completely recover. This is called an acute or short-term infection. For a small number of people, their bodies do not clear the virus on their own and they go on to develop chronic or long-term Hepatitis B.

## How is hepatitis B spread?

Hepatitis B is spread through direct contact with saliva, blood, semen, or other body fluids from an infected person. It is passed during sex or by sharing drug equipment like needles, cocaine straws, and crack pipes.

## What are the symptoms of Hepatitis B?

- Whether you have acute or chronic Hepatitis B, you may or may not have symptoms.
- Symptoms of acute Hepatitis B usually develop within four to six weeks of infection. Symptoms can be mild and some people do not realize they are infected. You may notice a general flu-like feeling with loss of appetite, fever, nausea, and vomiting. Other symptoms include dark-coloured urine, clay-coloured feces, yellow skin and/or eyes, and tenderness on your right side below your ribs.
- Symptoms of chronic and acute Hepatitis B are similar: they tend to be mild to moderate in intensity and typically they come and go.

## How do you test for Hepatitis B?

Be honest with a health care professional about your sexual history and drug use. You may be asked to give a blood sample to confirm the presence of Hepatitis B antibodies.

## How do I protect myself?

- There is an effective vaccine that will prevent infection.
  - Regular use of condoms, gloves, and dental dams, will reduce your chances of getting Hepatitis B and other STIBBs.
  - You can reduce your chances of coming into contact with Hepatitis B by reducing your number of sexual partners and by not sharing drug equipment.
-

## Hepatitis B and HIV

- Because HIV weakens the immune system, HIV-positive people who are also infected with Hepatitis B are more likely to progress to chronic Hepatitis B. If you have both HIV and Hepatitis B, consult with your doctor about your options.

## Hepatitis C (HCV)

*Hepatitis C* (HCV) is a virus that causes liver inflammation. There are acute and chronic stages of the disease. Around 20-25% of people are able to fight off the virus on their own, while 75-80% of people are not able to fight it off and it becomes chronic. In these cases HCV stays in the body and begins to damage the liver.

### How is Hepatitis C spread?

- HCV is passed through blood-to-blood contact. It is possible to be infected with multiple genotypes of HCV at the same time.
- Microscopic traces of blood can carry the virus and the virus can survive in dried blood outside the body for several days and up to weeks.
- The most common way to get HCV is by sharing needles during injection drug use as well as sharing needles for steroid or hormone use. It can also be passed through sharing cocaine straws and other drug equipment with blood on it.
- HCV can be passed during certain types of sexual activity that produce blood. This usually occurs when an infected partner inserts a penis, sex toy, or hand into the anus or vagina of their partner. Both rough sexual activity and prolonged sexual activity increase the chances that blood will be passed between people. Shared lube could be contaminated with blood during group sexual encounters and may also be a way to pass HCV.
- HCV is not passed in semen or feces.
- Less commonly, HCV can be passed when people share razors, nail clippers, or other personal care items that may have blood on them.

### What are the symptoms of Hepatitis C?

- HCV may not produce symptoms for several years. Many people are surprised to find out they have been infected.
- The acute or early stage is the first six months after infection. During this time, you may experience a general flu-like feeling with a loss of appetite,

experience anal discomfort or discharge. In rare cases, gonorrhea can appear in the throats of people who perform oral sex on someone infected with Gonorrhea.

- Some people don't experience any symptoms at all but this doesn't mean they're not contagious. If you think you've been exposed to gonorrhea, get tested.

### Testing for gonorrhea

Be honest with a health care professional about your sexual history and symptoms, and ask for a physical exam. You may be asked to give a sample of your urine or some fluid may be collected from your penis, anus, vagina, or throat.

### How do I protect myself?

- Regular use of condoms, gloves, and dental dams will reduce your chances of getting gonorrhea and other STBIs.
- Limiting the number of different people you engage in sexual activity with will also reduce your risk. If you have numerous partners, get tested regularly.
- Don't have sex with a person if they have symptoms or if they are being treated for gonorrhea.

### Gonorrhea and HIV

- Having any STBI or engaging in sexual activity with someone who has an STBI will increase your risk of picking up HIV.
- If you already have HIV, having gonorrhea may increase your viral load and increase the chances that you'll pass HIV on to others.
- Regular use of condoms, gloves, and dental dams will reduce the risk of picking up or passing on both gonorrhea and HIV.

## Syphilis

Syphilis is an STBI caused by bacteria. The symptoms of syphilis can be similar to other diseases, which may make it difficult to diagnose. Syphilis gets into the body through the mucous membranes, like your mouth, vagina, and anus. Close physical contact—oral sex, anal sex, rimming, vaginal sex and fisting—with a person who has syphilis will put you at risk for infection.

### What are the symptoms of syphilis?

Symptoms of syphilis come and go in four stages. You might notice them or you

in the throats of individuals who perform oral sex on an infected partner.

- Many people who are infected with chlamydia don't show any symptoms.

### How do you test for chlamydia?

The doctor or nurse will ask you for a urine sample or they may swab the urethra.

### How do I protect myself?

- Regular use of condoms, gloves, and dental dams will reduce your chances of picking up or passing on chlamydia and other STBBI's.
- Limiting the number of sexual partners you have will also reduce your risk. If you have lots of partners, get tested regularly.
- Don't have sex with someone if they have chlamydia symptoms, or if they are being treated for chlamydia.

### Chlamydia and HIV

- Regular use of condoms, gloves, and dental dams will reduce the risk of picking up or passing on both chlamydia and HIV.
- Having any STI or engaging in sexual activity with someone who has an STI will increase your risk of picking up HIV.
- If you already have HIV, having chlamydia may increase your viral load and increase the chances that you'll pass HIV on to others.

## Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea is an STBBI caused by bacteria. The bacteria infect the urethra, the tube that carries out urine. Gonorrhea can also infect the throat, anus, testicles, prostate, vagina, bladder and, in rare cases, the eyes.

### How is gonorrhea spread?

Gonorrhea is spread quite easily. You can pick up or pass on gonorrhea through oral, vaginal, or anal sex.

### What are the symptoms of gonorrhea?

- Symptoms appear one to three weeks after infection. You may experience a burning sensation during urination, or there may be a pus-like discharge from your urethra. Some people experience a painful swelling of the testicles called *epididymitis*.
- Individuals who have received anal sex from a gonorrhea-infected partner often

fatigue, and fever. You might also notice dark-coloured urine, yellow skin and/or eyes, and tenderness on your right side below your ribs. Many people do not experience any symptoms at all. A small number of people's bodies will clear the infection on their own during this stage.

- Chronic or long-term infection occurs in the majority of people; their bodies aren't able to clear the infection on their own during the acute stage. Symptoms typically do not occur for several years. Gradually, however, the disease progresses to the point where the liver cannot function properly. Fatigue and poor appetite are common problems at this stage.

### How do you test for Hepatitis C?

You must wait a minimum of ten weeks to get tested for HCV. The test looks for HCV antibodies in the blood, which take time to show up. The blood test takes between 7-14 days to get results. If an antibody test is positive, showing exposure to HCV, then an RNA-PCR blood test will be done to see if an HCV infection is present.

### How do I protect myself?

- Don't share anything that may have blood on it.
- Don't share drug equipment, especially needles, cocaine straws, or drug pipes.
- During sexual activity, don't put anything into your anus, vagina, or mouth that might have someone else's blood on it. Sharing lube should also be avoided.
- Use condoms during anal and vaginal sex, and use plenty of lube to reduce tearing in your anus. There is also less risk of contracting HCV when having gentle or brief anal or vaginal sex. For fisting, use gloves on a clean arm and don't share lube. Change condoms or gloves each time you move between partners. Be sure to wash up between partners as well.
- You can reduce your chances of coming into contact with HCV by reducing your number of sexual partners. If you have numerous partners, get tested regularly and practice safer sex.

### Hepatitis C and HIV

- HIV-positive folks are especially vulnerable to getting HCV during sex. Compared to HIV-negative people, HIV-positive individuals' bodies are less likely to clear HCV on their own. They are also less likely to respond to antiviral drugs.

# Human Papilloma Virus (Genital Warts)

*Human papilloma virus* (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted blood born infection (STBBI). There are various strains or types of HPV that may show up on your penis or anus as genital warts.

## What are the symptoms of HPV?

- Almost everyone will be exposed to HPV during their lifetime, but most will never know it because they don't develop visible warts or other symptoms.
- Some "low-risk" strains of HPV may cause genital warts that appear weeks or months after exposure. Small warts look like small bumps or pimples; bigger ones can look like cauliflower. The warts are usually painless but sometimes they itch or burn; occasionally they may bleed. The warts are bothersome but are usually benign.
- A small number of "high-risk" HPV strains are not associated with warts but in rare cases they may cause anal or cervical cancer.

## How is HPV spread?

HPV is extremely common and spreads very easily. HPV is usually spread through anal sex, but can also be transmitted through oral sex, vaginal sex, rimming, or skin-on-skin contact.

## How do you test for HPV?

- Currently there is no easy test for HPV. Most doctors or nurses diagnose HPV by seeing or feeling warts on the genital or anal area.
- A pap smear is used routinely to test for precancerous cells on a person's cervix. Sometimes a similar test is used inside a person's anus.

## How do I protect myself?

- Be honest with a health care professional about your sexual history and symptoms. Ask for a physical exam.
- Your options might include a vaccine called Gardasil. It was approved by Health Canada in February of 2010 for individuals age nine to 26 for the prevention of infection caused by HPV. It's most effective when given before one becomes sexually active. Currently, it costs between \$150 and \$300, although some health plans cover the cost. Young people assigned female at birth are routinely immunized and there is currently a debate as to whether or not to do the same for people assigned male at birth.

- Condoms, gloves, and dental dams will reduce overall exposure. Latex barriers do not guarantee protection, however, because they don't cover all of skin surfaces.
- Limiting the number of different sexual partners you have will also reduce your exposure.

## HPV and HIV

- Nearly all HIV-positive people have been exposed to HPV.
- Visible warts may be harder to treat if you are HIV positive, especially if your CD4 cell count is low. You may also be at increased risk of getting precancerous cells just inside your anus (anal dysplasia).

## Chlamydia

*Chlamydia* is an STBBI caused by bacteria. The bacteria infect the urethra, which is the tube that carries out urine. Chlamydia can also infect the anus and throat. Chlamydia is one of the most common STBBIs and is spread very easily. It can be picked up or passed on through anal, oral, and vaginal sex.



(Condoms from Saskatoon Sexual Health: [wrapitupsk.ca](http://wrapitupsk.ca))

## Symptoms of chlamydia

- Symptoms appear one to two weeks following infection. Chlamydia produces a burning sensation during urination and sometimes a pus-like discharge from the penis. Some people get a painful swelling of the testicles called *epididymitis*.
- People who have had anal sex with a chlamydia-infected partner often experience anal discomfort or discharge. In rare cases, chlamydia can appear