

Gay, Bisexual, and MSM Sexual Health

Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (including trans men who have sex with men) are a priority population group for STIs and HIV. GP's, nurses, and other medical practitioners have an essential role in looking after their health.

01 - It's all about trust

Your patient is presenting to you for sexual health services because they trust you. Confidential, discrimination free, judgment free and inclusive practice all plays a part in that trust. Negative attitudes and beliefs towards sex are counterproductive to providing best practice and ethical sexual health services. If you find yourself feeling uncomfortable while talking about sex with a patient, it's important that you refer them on to another service that can support them. There are inclusive services listed below that can support gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men for you to refer to.

02 - Ask the right questions

When taking someone's sexual history, it's important to ensure that:

- > You never assume a person's sexual behaviours based on their sexual orientation, or any other characteristics.
- > Use general neutral language when referring to your patient's partners until you know their gender ('Other than your regular partner have you had sex with anyone else?')
- > All questions asked have relevance to your practice.
- > All questions are direct and straight to the point. ('When was your most recent sexual encounter?', 'What kind of sex did you have?', 'How frequently do you use condoms?')

Read more about taking a sexual history [here](#).

03 - Testing

For asymptomatic men who have sex with men, the following STI tests should be offered 3 monthly* after an appropriate discussion:

Blood tests:

- > Syphilis serology
- > HIV antibody/antigen screening test (if not known to be HIV positive)
- > Hepatitis A antibody
- > Hepatitis B core antibody, surface antigen
- > Hepatitis C

NAAT/PCR tests for gonorrhoea and chlamydia:

- > Oropharyngeal swab
- > First pass urine
- > Anorectal swab

*MSM who are not sexually active or are in monogamous relationships may be tested less frequently, but at least annually.

Cervical Cancer Screening

Everybody with a cervix is at risk of cervical cancer. This means that trans men and trans masc people who have a cervix will require regular Cervical Screening Tests. Check in with your patient regarding what practices they will need to feel safe before, during and after this procedure. Your patient needs to feel that they can trust you. If you find yourself feeling uncomfortable while talking through this with a patient, it's important that you refer them on to another service (like a trans and gender diverse inclusive GP) that can support them.

04 - Contact Tracing & Partner Notification

Once an STI diagnosis has been made, it is the diagnosing clinician's responsibility to begin a discussion about contact tracing with the patient. The process of contact tracing aims to reduce STI transmission through early detection and treatment.

The websites below can help your patients with their own contact tracing, and encouraging their partners to get tested.

- www.thedramadownunder.info
- www.letthemknow.org.au
- www.bettertoknow.org.au

For more information about contact tracing, visit: [Australasian Contact Tracing Guidelines](#)

05 - PrEP, PEP & U=U

HIV medications offer effective strategies to prevent HIV transmission.

PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) is a highly effective preventive medication to protect a person from contracting HIV. It should be actively offered to people who are at risk of HIV infection. To determine a person's suitability for PrEP, providers need to obtain a thorough sexual and drug-use history at baseline and at each 3-monthly review.

PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis) is a 28 day course of HIV medication that is effective in preventing HIV infection if started within 72 hours of exposure. The key to PEP is accessing it as soon as possible after a potential exposure to HIV. PEP can be accessed from a local sexual health clinic, or emergency department. Go to www.getpep.info for more information.

U=U (Undetectable=Untransmissible) is a method of treatment as prevention by which people living with HIV who maintain a plasma HIV RNA (viral load) of <200 copies/mL with antiretroviral therapy (ART) are unable to sexually transmit HIV to their partners. Other methods of prevention should be used in the first 6 months of treatment and until a viral load of <200 copies/mL has been documented.

For more information about PrEP, PEP, and U=U visit the [ASHM resource library](#).

Knowing where to go

- [Meridian ACT](#)
- [STI/HIV Testing Tool](#)
- [Australian STI Management Guidelines](#)
- [STIGMA Guidelines](#)
- [Decision Making in PrEP](#)
- [5i dfU UqJUb GcWYmZcf<# JZ JfU`<YdUhgUbX GYI i U`<YU'h A YX MbY](#)
- [: Um5 bX 'A UffYX 'A Ybftj 5 ggc WUhc b'](#)
- [5i dfU UqJUb: YXYfUhc b'c Z5 -8 G'c f' Ub JdUhc bg'](#)
- [57 H/ 'GBGK '7 ca a i b\]m<YU'h 'DUhk Umq](#)
- [7 UbVYffU 'GYI i U`<YU'h '7 YbhfY](#)

SEXUAL HEALTH FOR MSM*

*Men who have sex with men.

05

HIV

- > HIV medications offer effective strategies to prevent HIV transmission.
- > PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) is a highly effective preventive medication to protect a person from contracting HIV.
- > PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis) is a 28 day course of HIV medication that is effective in preventing HIV infection if started within 72 hours of exposure.
- > U=U (Undetectable = Untransmissible) is a method of treatment as prevention. People living with HIV who maintain a plasma HIV RNA (viral load) of <200 copies/ml with antiretroviral therapy (ART) are unable to sexually transmit HIV to their partners.

01

IT'S ALL ABOUT TRUST

- > Your patient is presenting for sexual health services because they trust you.
- > Confidential, discrimination free, judgment free and inclusive practice = trust.
- > Positive attitudes towards sex = trust.
- > Listening, respecting and understanding sexual diversity = trust.

02

ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

- > Never assume a person's sexual behaviours based on their sexual orientation, or any other characteristics.
- > Use general neutral language when referring to your patient's partners until you know their gender ('Other than your regular partner have you had sex with anyone else?')
- > All questions asked must have relevance to your practice.
- > All questions must be direct and straight to the point. ('When was your most recent sexual encounter?', 'What kind of sex did you have?', 'Do you practice safe sex?')

04

CONTACT TRACING AND PARTNER NOTIFICATION

- > Once an STI diagnosis has been made, it is the diagnosing clinician's responsibility to begin a discussion about contact tracing with the patient. The process of contact tracing aims to reduce STI transmission through early detection and treatment.
- > For more information about contact tracing, visit: Australasian Contact Tracing Guidelines
- > Let Them Know and The Drama Downunder are notification tools your patient can use to be anonymous.

SEXUAL HEALTH

GAY

BISEXUAL

TRANS

MSM

03

TESTING

Asymptomatic men who have sex with men should be offered the following STI tests 3 monthly¹.

BLOOD TESTS

- > Syphilis serology
- > HIV antibody/antigen screening test (if not known to be HIV positive)
- > Hepatitis A antibody
- > Hepatitis B core antibody, surface antigen
- > Hepatitis C

NAAT/PCR tests for gonorrhoea and chlamydia

- > Oropharyngeal swab
- > First pass urine
- > Anorectal swab

CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING

- > Trans men and trans masc people who have a cervix will require regular Cervical Screening Tests
- > Your patient may need additional practices to feel safe before, during and after this procedure.
- > Check in with them to ensure trust and safety throughout.

1. MSM who are not sexually active or are in monogamous relationships may be tested less frequently, but at least annually.

Your patient needs to feel that they can trust you and be comfortable with you. If you find yourself feeling uncomfortable while taking about sex with a patient, it's important that you refer them on to another service that can support them.