



[The Lambda Clinic - Sexual Health Advice - Patient Information Leaflet](http://www.lambdaclinic.co.uk/sexually-transmitted-infections.html)
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Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) or Diseases

This page gives you some brief information about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and what you are advised to do if you suspect that you have a sexually transmitted infection. There are separate pages that deal with each infection in more detail. See the column on the right to read more about the specific sexually transmitted infections.

What is a sexually transmitted infection (STI)?

A sexual transmitted infection (STI) is an infection that can be passed from person to person during vaginal, anal or oral sex. You do not have to have had lots of sexual partners to get a sexually transmitted infection (STI). There are several different types of sexually transmitted infections. Both men and women can pass on sexually transmitted infections.

Common types of sexually transmitted infections?

The ten most common sexual transmitted infections (STIs) in the UK are: [genital warts](#), [chlamydia](#), [genital herpes](#), [gonorrhoea](#), [HIV and AIDS](#), [hepatitis B](#), [hepatitis C](#), [pubic lice](#), [syphilis](#) and [trichomonas vaginalis](#).

How will I know if I have a sexual transmitted infection infection?

Symptoms of each sexually transmitted infection can vary from local infection / glands to infection affecting other parts of the body.

Not everyone who has a sexually transmitted infection will have symptoms. Sometimes symptoms may not appear for months or they may go away but still harbour the infection in a dormant state. It is also possible to pass on a sexually transmitted infection to others even if you do not have symptoms.

If you experience any of the following you should seek advice:

- An ulcer, sore, rash, or lump around the vagina / penis or anus.
- A vaginal discharge from the vagina or penis.
- Pain or burning on passing urine.
- Pain and/or bleeding during and after sexual intercourse.
- Pain and swelling of the glands in the groin region or in the testicles or lower abdomen.
- If you are unsure about your partner's sexual practice and he / she is a new partner you may wish to be tested for a sexually transmitted infection if you have had unprotected sex with them i.e. had sex without using a condom.



What if I suspect that I have a sexually transmitted infection?

- The **Lambda Clinic** is a special clinic that helps people who have or may have a sexually transmitted infection or certain other problems with their genitals / urinary system.
- Our professional Staff in our **Lambda Clinic** include doctors, nurses and health advisers.
- Anyone can attend our clinic regardless of ethnic group, age, whether you are gay, lesbian, straight or bisexual. All advice given will be strictly confidential and you will not be judged because of your sexual behaviour.
- You **DO NOT** need a referral by your General Practitioner (GP).
- You can book into the **Lambda Clinic** with an alias name i.e. you can use a different name to the one that you usually go with. This will protect your identity, which we will respect.
- We have a **ONE** fixed price cost for attending the clinic which includes the consultation, all swabs and blood tests and also the short term appropriate treatments.

What can I expect when I attend the Lambda Clinic?

Registration

When you arrive at a clinic you will have to register. You will be asked your name, address, date of birth, contact telephone number, and name of your GP. This information is treated with the utmost confidentiality. The clinic will not contact you at home or contact your GP without your specific permission. Also, any records from GUM clinics will not go on your main medical record without your specific permission.

However, if you have a concern, you do not have to give any details. You can even give a false name. The important thing is that whatever name you do use, you should use the same name for any follow up appointments to avoid any confusion, particularly when you return for the results of any tests.

Initial assessment

You will be seen initially by a doctor. They will need to ask you some questions about your sex life and about any symptoms you may have. This is important to determine what tests (if any) you may require. You might feel embarrassed but do be honest as these questions help the doctor to do the correct tests. If you are not sure why the questions are being asked – just say so.

Examination

The doctor will usually examine you, initially as a general examination to check on your general health. The examination includes looking carefully at your genitals for signs of discharge, lumps, redness or ulcers. The doctor may also feel your groins (the top of your legs) to check for enlarged or tender lymph nodes (glands).



Tests

Depending on the initial assessment and examination, the doctor may advise on some tests and ask for your consent to do these tests. You will not automatically be tested for all infections. All tests are optional and will only be done with your permission. However, at the **Lambda Clinic** all these tests are inclusive within the ONE fixed fee price

Tests may include:

1. Urine sample

2. Swabs:

- A swab is a small cotton wool ball on a stick which can be gently rubbed in various places to obtain a sample of discharge, mucus or cells. The procedure only takes a few seconds and is not painful, although it may be slightly uncomfortable.
- Usual areas from where a swab is taken from: urethra (pipe from where you pass urine), vagina, cervix (neck of the womb), throat and rectum (back passage). Swabs are used to detect gonorrhoea, chlamydia, trichomonas vaginalis and genital herpes. A swab can also detect thrush (candida), bacterial vaginosis and various other bacteria which may not be sexually transmitted infections.

3. Blood tests

To test for hepatitis B, hepatitis C, syphilis and HIV.

Diagnosis

A diagnosis can sometimes be made from just an examination. If swabs have been taken then waiting for confirmation is advised. These tests can take a few days to be reported from the laboratory. The **Lambda Clinic** will arrange with you how you will get the results to maintain your confidentiality.

Advice about sexual partners

If you are diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection then the clinic will encourage you to tell any current or recent sexual partners. You are not obliged to do this. However, it is best that any recent sexual partners should know that they might also be infected. They should also be offered testing, and treatment if necessary, to prevent the infection being spread any further. If you feel that it would be too difficult to tell your sexual partner, the **Lambda Clinic** can contact people anonymously on your behalf. We use a 'contact slip' that, with your permission, we send to your partner. The slip explains that they may have been exposed to a sexually transmitted infection and that they should go for a check-up. It does not say what the infection is, and it does NOT have your name on it, so your confidentiality is protected. This is called partner notification.

Treatment

The treatment that you will be offered depends on what sexually transmitted infection is found. For example, a short course of antibiotics can usually clear away chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis, and trichomonas. A cream or lotion can clear pubic lice and scabies. Topical (skin) treatments can usually clear most anogenital warts. Treatments for genital herpes, hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV are more complex and may involve



referral to specialist local hospitals. You will be given advice about what treatment options you have and given time to ask questions. Also, there are separate leaflets for all of these conditions that gives details about treatment options.

If you are prescribed antibiotics then it is important to finish the full course of tablets otherwise the treatment can be incomplete. If you develop side-effects then seek advice from the **Lambda Clinic** staff or from your GP. Do not simply stop taking the medication. For some infections you will be asked to return after the course of treatment has been completed to check that the infection has gone.

Do not have sex again until advised by the **Lambda Clinic**. Depending on the infection, this may be until you are given the 'all clear' from a repeat test. The aim is to prevent you from passing on the infection to others.

Advice from a sexual health adviser

The **Lambda Clinic** has a sexual health adviser. You will be seen by the sexual health adviser if the doctor thinks that this will be useful. A sexual health adviser is specially trained and can:

- Tell you more about sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid catching them in future. For example, the risk of infection increases with the number of changes of sexual partner. Wearing a condom during sex helps to prevent against sexually transmitted infections.
- Give you advice on how to cope with any symptoms.
- Offer you free condoms which can help to prevent future sexually transmitted infections.
- Give advice about what to tell your current sexual partner or previous sexual partners.
- Help you with contacting previous sexual partners who should be tested or treated. For example, you may be given a card with a number on it, plus a printed message advising the person who is given the card to visit the **Lambda Clinic**.

[The Lambda Clinic](#)

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