

To Learn More

CDC-INFO

1-800-232-4636

www.cdc.gov/std

STD & Gay Men



Professional models were used in all photos.

This brochure is not intended as a substitute for your health professional's opinion or care.

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You can stay safer

- **Get tested.** If you're having sex with more than one partner, get checked. Regular checkups are a good way to find and treat STD early. See your health care provider any time you have STD symptoms.
- **Get vaccinated.** You can get shots to protect you from hepatitis A and hepatitis B. Talk with your health care provider about the HPV vaccine to help protect against genital warts.
- **Be smart about behaviors.** Keep taking steps to prevent HIV. Be aware of how you can reduce your risk for other STD.
- **Think before using alcohol and other drugs.** Being under the influence makes it harder to follow through on your commitment to stay safe.



"My doctor helped me decide how often to get checked for HIV and other STD."

Get tested

Health care provider. You can get tested for STD by your provider. The results of these tests will be kept in your medical record.

Public health clinic. Testing may be free or low cost. You may be able to be tested anonymously for HIV. (Then the results won't go in your health records.)

Call your local Public Health Department for more information. Find the number in your phone book or on the Internet.

Can't I just find partners who don't have an STD?

Nice idea. But it doesn't always work.

- You can't tell by looking if someone has an STD. But if you see bumps, sores, lesions or drips on or around his mouth, penis or anus, don't have sex.
- Men with an STD may not know it.
- And—you already know this—some people may not tell you they have an STD.

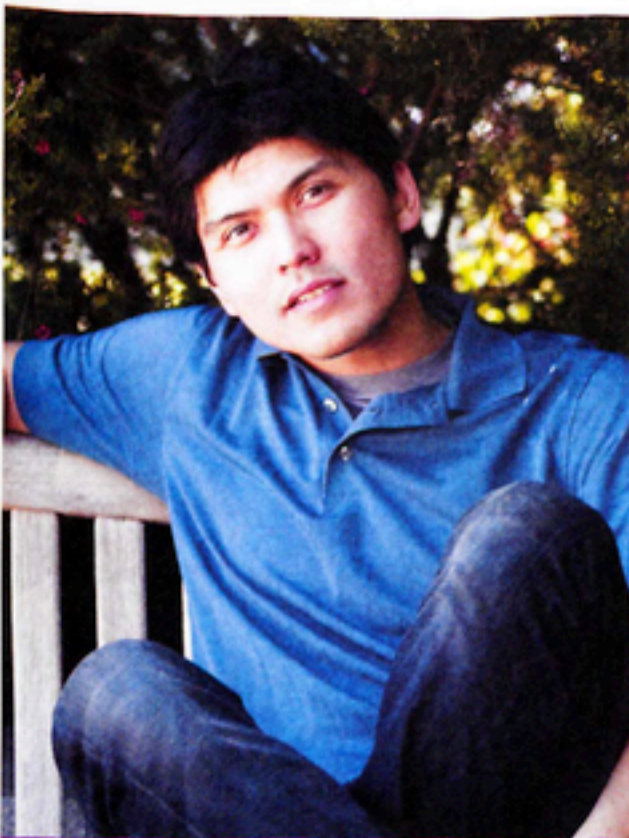
Protect yourself. Protect your partner.

You may already be taking steps to reduce your HIV risks.
These may not protect you from other STD.

"I have sex with someone with the same HIV status."

- Most men who choose this strategy know the HIV risks.
- If you're negative, you can't tell by looking whether someone has HIV. Many people don't know they have it. Some may not want to tell you.
- If you're positive, you might get another strain of HIV from a positive partner.
- If you aren't using condoms, other STD can be passed.

Condoms can help protect you and your partner from HIV and other STD.



"When a man knows what he's doing, a condom can be very sexy."

"I have oral sex."

It's true that getting HIV through oral sex is rare. But:

- Other STD can be passed easily through oral sex.
- If you *give* oral sex, you can get an STD in your mouth or throat.
- If you *get* oral sex, you can get an STD in your penis.

Condoms can reduce your STD risk.

"I have fewer partners."

- By itself, this isn't a good strategy.
- A fair number of men already have HIV or another STD.
- Even with fewer partners, you're likely to meet up with someone who has something.

To lower your risk, have fewer partners and use condoms.

Why use condoms?

Condoms are highly effective in preventing HIV. They also reduce your STD risk.

- Condoms work well to prevent fluid STDs. When used correctly, they create a barrier so fluids don't reach a partner. For the best protection, use them every time you have sex.
- Condoms protect you from skin-to-skin STDs if the condom covers all the areas where the STD is. If it doesn't, the STD can still be passed.

STDs cause problems

HIV is the big concern for most men. In comparison, other STDs don't seem that serious. But they can be.

- **STDs feel bad.** STDs can cause itching, bumps, burning, aches, pains and drips. (Sometimes, a person doesn't have symptoms. But he can still give the STD to a sex partner.)
- **STDs look bad.** Symptoms vary. But STDs that cause warts, sores or drips are unpleasant.
- **STDs cramp your style.** If you have an STD, it's important not to have sex with anyone until you get treated.
- **You can't count on an easy fix.** Most STDs respond well to treatment. But others don't. Resistant strains are more and more common and can be hard to treat.
- **You have to get treated.** Untreated STDs get worse. Some can lead to serious consequences, such as blindness or dementia. It's very important to get treatment if you think you might have an STD.

Knowing about STD helps you balance risks and consequences. Then you can make choices that work for you.

STD and HIV

Whatever your HIV status, avoiding other STD is a very good choice.

If you have HIV...

- Some STDs can make HIV more serious.
- STD symptoms might be more severe. Treatment might be more difficult.
- STDs make it easier for you to pass HIV to others.

If you don't have HIV...

- Getting an STD may increase your HIV risk.
- Getting an STD can be a sign that you're doing things that put you at risk for HIV too.
- Avoiding STD is a big part of your strategy to avoid HIV.

There are 2 main types of STD

- **Fluid STDs** are passed when infected semen or blood comes into contact with a partner's mouth, rectum or urethra. Fluid STDs include HIV, gonorrhea, chlamydia and hepatitis B.
- **Skin-to-skin STDs** are passed when sores or lesions caused by the STD come into contact with a partner's skin. (These STDs can also be passed when no sores are visible on the skin.)

Skin-to-skin STDs include herpes, HPV (which can cause genital and anal warts), syphilis and chancroid.
- **Two other STDs** can be passed through fecal matter during oral-anal sex (rimming). They are hepatitis A and parasite infections such as giardiasis and amebiasis.