

Sexual Health



A guide to better sexual health

Fact sheet 1 of 2

What's the problem?

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are steadily increasing in Jersey. The most common STIs are chlamydia, gonorrhoea, genital warts, syphilis, herpes, and HIV (the virus that causes AIDS). Chlamydia and genital warts are the two most common STIs in Jersey.

Chlamydia is a particularly worrying STI as there are often no symptoms, which means an infected person can pass it on to someone else unknowingly. If left untreated chlamydia can cause pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancy and infertility.

Genital warts are the second most common STI in Jersey. If left untreated one of the virus's that causes genital warts can also cause cervical cancer.

Syphilis, which can cause neurological and cardiovascular disease, is more common in Jersey than it is in the UK.

HIV damages the body's immune system so that it cannot fight off infections. There are people living with HIV in Jersey and likely to be others who are unaware of their infection. HIV is preventable and treatable, but there is no cure at present.

Who is at risk of catching STIs?

Anyone who has unprotected sex is at risk of infection and possibly unplanned pregnancy. However, research shows that certain groups of people are more at risk.

These include young people under 25, men who have sex with men (MSM) and certain ethnic minority groups.

How can I protect myself?

The best way to protect yourself against sexually transmitted infections is to use condoms. Condoms are the only barrier method of contraception that protect against most STIs.

However, condoms may not protect you fully against genital warts and herpes as these may be present around the genital area and can be passed on through skin to skin contact (where the condom does not cover).

If you are having sex with a new partner you should always use a condom every time you have sex, this includes oral and anal sex. Dental dams can also be used to protect against STIs during oral sex. Also, if you and your partner have been using condoms and wish to stop, you should both get tested to check that neither of you have an STI before you stop using them. Remember some STIs such as chlamydia have no symptoms, so the only way you can be sure neither of you have an infection is to get tested.

Local service information:

GUM clinic,
The General Hospital,
The Parade, St.Helier
Tel: 01534 622856

Family Planning Centre,
Le Bas Centre,
St.Saviours Road, St.Helier
Tel: 01534 443781

Brook (under 21s),
7 Nelson Street, St.Helier
Tel: 01534 507981

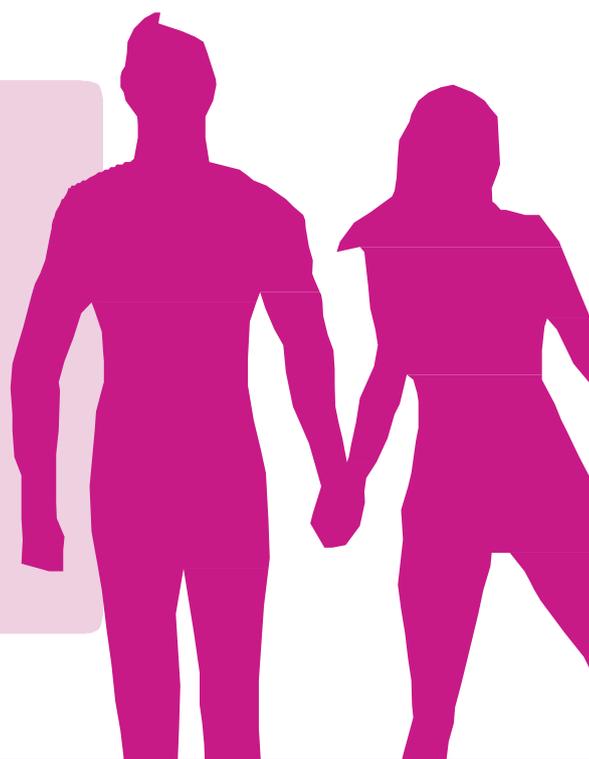
Where can I get tested?

The Genito Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinic is based in the General Hospital, and is a free and confidential service. This means they will not share any information about you with anyone else without your permission.

The details and results of your tests are also not kept on your medical records. Both men and women can get tested for all STIs at the GUM. The nurse or doctor at the clinic will take swabs (females) or urine samples (males) to test for most STIs, and blood samples to test for HIV and hepatitis.

For more information and details of opening times call **622856**.

The Family Planning Service and Brook offer Chlamydia Screening for females, however if you have had unprotected sex and are concerned that you may have an STI you would be advised to go the GUM clinic.





Where can I get condoms?

Free condoms are available from the GUM clinic, the Family Planning Clinic at Le Bas Centre, and also Brook (under 21s). Both male and female condoms (femidoms) are available. You can buy condoms from pharmacies, including Boots in town. Some GPs also provide free condoms

Are all condoms safe?

All condoms distributed by the local sexual health services mentioned in this fact-sheet are safe to use. When you are given free condoms at these services the nurse or doctor will also make sure you know how to use them correctly and safely, and that you know where to go for help if the condom breaks.

Remember, if used correctly condoms are 97% effective in stopping infection and pregnancy. However some condoms that can be bought in toilet dispensing machines and from the internet are not safe to use.

Condoms: What should I look for?

- The expiry date on the packet- An out of date condom is not safe as it will most likely break during intercourse.
- The CE mark- this shows the condom has been rigorously tested and is safe to use by European standards
- Any cuts, holes or tears in the packet- if the condom packet has been damaged in any way do not use it as the condom itself may also have been damaged and may break easily.
- The overall look of the packet- if the foil packet looks worn and battered do not use it. Chances are the condom has been in someone's pocket or wallet and been exposed to heat and friction which would have damaged the condom inside.

What happens if the condom breaks?

If a condom breaks during sex it can be worrying for both people. The best thing you can do is go to the GUM clinic for advice and STI testing. If you are a woman you also need to consider the risk of pregnancy. You can take emergency hormonal contraception (often called 'the morning after pill') up to 72 hours after sex.

The Family Planning Service and Brook (under 21s) provide emergency contraception free. Brook is a walk-in service, however you will need to call and make an appointment at the Family Planning Service. You can also buy emergency contraception over the counter at your local pharmacy, but it will cost around £25, and you must be over 16. Alternatively you can have an IUD (otherwise known as 'the coil') fitted up to 5 days after sex. However, your chances of preventing pregnancy with these methods decrease with time so it's important to get to Brook or the Family Planning Service as soon as possible.

Useful websites:

www.brook.org.uk - National Brook website, providing information for both young people and professionals.

www.endo.org.uk - Website for women affected by endometriosis, their partners and families.

www.fpa.org.uk - Confidential information and advice on contraception and sexual and reproductive health.

www.herpes.org.uk - Information about the herpes simplex virus.

www.teenagehealthfreak.co.uk - Website for teenagers with a wide range of medical and sexual issues.

www.maristopes.org.uk - Online sexual health information and advice on issues such as abortion, pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

www.tht.org.uk - Advice and support to anyone living with HIV or concerned about any sexual health issues.

www.childline.org.uk - Provides a free, confidential telephone counselling service for children or young people with any problem.

www.avert.org.uk - International AIDS & Medical Research charity. Website including sections aimed specifically at young people.