Chlamydia is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI) in the UK and is most common in under 25s.

Here are some key facts:

* There are often no signs or symptoms
* It can affect anyone who has ever had unprotected sex
* 1 in 10 young people who are sexually active are thought to have chlamydia
* It is a bacterial infection
* Tests usually involve giving a urine sample or taking a swab
* If left untreated can affect fertility in men and women
* It is passed on through unprotected vaginal, anal or oral sex, sharing sex toys or genital-to-genital contact
* The only way to protect yourself is to use condoms every time you have sex
* It is treated with antibiotics

Trichomoniasis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by a tiny parasite called Trichomonas vaginalis, or TV, which infects the vagina and the urethra in both men and women.

Here are some key facts:

* 50% of men and women don’t experience symptoms
* If symptoms do appear, soreness, swelling and itchiness is common in the vagina and head of the penis. Women can also experience a fishy-smelling discharge that may be yellow-green, thick, thin or frothy. Men can also experience pain during ejaculation or urination and thin white discharge.
* Diagnosing trichomoniasis is tricky because its symptoms are similar to that of other STIS but it can be tested for by taking a swab
* Trichomoniasis can be passed on through unprotected vaginal sex or sharing sex toys
* Without treatment, the infection can last for months but is easily treated with antibiotics
* It can be serious during pregnancy as it may increase the risk of complications such as premature birth

Gonorrhoea is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by a bacteria. It is the second most common bacterial STI in the UK after chlamydia and can lead to infertility in men and women.

Here are some key facts:

* 1 in 10 men and half of women with gonorrhoea experience no signs or symptoms
* Symptoms can include yellow or green discharge, a burning feeling when peeing and pain or tenderness in the tummy
* It can affect anyone who has ever had unprotected sex
* Tests usually involve taking a swab of discharge or giving a urine sample
* If left untreated can affect fertility in men and women
* It is a bacterial infection
* It is passed on through unprotected vaginal, anal or oral sex, sharing sex toys or genital-to-genital contact
* The only way to protect yourself is to use [condoms](https://www.brook.org.uk/your-life/condoms) every time you have sex
* It is treated with antibiotics
* Most of the 25,000 cases reported in the UK in 2012 were in under 25s

Genital warts are caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV) and are small growths or bumps that appear on or around the genital or anal area.

Genital warts are the second most common type of sexually transmitted infections (STI) in under 25s in the UK, after chlamydia.

Here are some key facts:

* Genital warts are a viral skin infection caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV) but not everyone with the virus will develop genital warts
* There are over 100 different types of HPV which can affect different parts of the body. About 30 different types of HPV can affect the genital skin but 90% of genital warts are caused by two types of the virus (types 6 and 11)
* Genital warts are not caused by the same virus that causes warts on hands or verrucas on the feet
* Genital warts are spread by skin-to-skin contact
* You don’t need to have penetrative sex to pass on genital warts but they can be passed on during vaginal or anal sex, or by sharing sex toys
* They are usually painless but look unpleasant and this can be distressing
* Genital warts can take months or years to develop after infection so it does not necessarily mean your partner has been having sex with other people
* Genital warts can be passed on even if they are not visible
* Treatment will depend on how many you have but may involve creams or freezing (cryotherapy)
* You should not use the wart creams that are available over the counter because they are designed to only treat warts on the hands or verrucas
* Diagnosis involves a health professional examining the area
* Certain strains of HPV (16 and 18) can cause cell changes that can lead to cervical cancer. There is a vaccination programme that is offered to all girls aged 12 – 13 to protect against some of the different strains of HPV. This vaccine offers protection against the two types of HPV (16 & 18) and also offers protection against developing genital warts. There has been a fall in genital warts because of the HPV vaccine.
* In July 2018 the Department of Health and Social Care decided to extend the vaccination programme to boys. This will likely begin late 2019

Genital herpes is caused by the virus Herpes Simplex (HSV). There are two types, HSV 1 and HSV 2. Both HSV 1 and HSV 2 can infect the genital and anal area and also the mouth and nose (cold sores).

Here are some key facts:

* It is highly contagious (it easily spreads from person to person)
* It causes very sore, painful blisters on the genitals
* It can affect anyone who is sexually active
* Even after treatment, the virus remains in your body and can cause outbreaks at a later date
* Tests usually involve taking a swab of fluid from a blister
* It can be passed on through any kind of sexual contact
* Even if someone with genital herpes has no symptoms, they can pass it on
* The only way to protect yourself is to use condoms every time you have sex and avoiding having any sexual contact before during or after an outbreak
* It is treated with antiviral medicines but there is no cure
* There are a number of self-help treatments to ease symptoms

## Thrush is a yeast infection that is caused by a fungus that lives naturally in the body. It’s not a sexually transmitted infection, but it can be passed on during sex.

Most men won’t get thrush, but it’s estimated that three out of four women will develop it at some point in their lives. It is a very common cause of unusual vaginal discharge.

Thrush symptoms can be caused by a number of triggers, for example, antibiotics, pregnancy, using products that cause irritation to the vagina such as highly perfumed bubble bath or vaginal deodorant. Sometimes thrush can happen if you have other illnesses – for example uncontrolled diabetes.

Hepatitis is the medical name for inflammation of the liver. There are different causes of hepatitis, some of which are viruses and can be transmitted through sexual activity, others can be caused by alcohol. This page focuses on those types of viral hepatitis that can be sexually transmitted.

Here are some key facts:

* The commonest type of viral hepatitis in the UK that is sexually transmitted is hepatitis B
* Most hepatitis C in the UK is transmitted by the sharing of equipment for intravenous drug use
* Some types of hepatitis can pass without affecting the liver, but others can become more chronic and last for many years, or cause cirrhosis (scarring of the liver)
* There can be no symptoms, but initial symptoms can be similar to the flu such as temperature, muscle and joint pain and feeling sick
* Different types of hepatitis can be carried in the blood and other bodily fluids such as faeces, saliva, semen and vaginal fluids, so they can be transmitted through unprotected vaginal, anal or oral sex
* There is a vaccination for hepatitis A and hepatitis B, although this is usually only recommended if you are travelling to certain countries where these types of hepatitis can be more easily transmitted due to poor sanitation. There is no vaccination for hepatitis C
* Hepatitis can be diagnosed by blood test, which can also include a test of your liver function
* Antiviral medications can be prescribed to manage symptoms, in cases of chronic hepatitis C this may lead to a cure but not always

## Cystitis means soreness and swelling (inflammation) of the bladder. It is usually caused by a bladder infection and is not a sexually transmitted infection.

Cystitis can occur at any age, in men and women, but is more common in women. It is more common in women who are sexually active or pregnant. Almost all women will experience cystitis at least once in their lifetime and around one in five women will get it again (known as recurrent cystitis). You should see your GP if you experience the symptoms of cystitis for the first time.

The symptoms of cystitis in men can be caused by other conditions so men should also see their GP if they notice symptoms.

You can be tested and treated for cystitis at [your nearest GP surgery](http://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/GP/LocationSearch/4) or at [GUM or sexual health clinics](http://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Genito-Urinary-Medicine/LocationSearch/686). Brook services do not offer testing or treatment for cystitis but if we think you may have cystitis, we will always do our best to advise you on where you can go for further help

HIV is a virus that damages the body's immune system so it cannot fight off infections. HIV is most commonly transmitted (passed on) through vaginal or anal sex without using a condom.

Here are some key facts:

* HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus
* AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, sometimes referred to as ‘late stage HIV’) is the final stages of HIV infection when the body can no longer fight off life threatening infections. With early diagnosis and treatment most people with HIV will not go on to develop AIDS
* In 2013, around 100,000 people in the UK were living with HIV
* The fact that HIV only affects men who have sex with men is a myth. Over half of those living with HIV are heterosexual
* HIV can be transmitted through blood, semen (including pre-come) and vaginal fluids (less commonly through oral sex or sex toys)
* Often you won’t have symptoms for many years but in that time, HIV will multiply and cause progressive damage to your immune system
* HIV is preventable (through using condoms) and treatable (with drugs called antiretrovirals), but it is not curable
* HIV can be detected in the body four weeks after exposure to the virus. The most common way of testing for HIV involves taking a small sample of blood
* Anti-HIV medication called PEP may stop you becoming infected if taken within 72 hours of exposure but this is only prescribed to those known to be at high risk

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by a bacteria. It is less common than other STIs but it is on the rise. It develops in three stages but can be cured if treated early.

Here are some key facts:

* It is a bacterial infection
* It can affect anyone who has ever had unprotected sex
* It is passed on through unprotected vaginal, anal or oral sex, sharing sex toys or genital-to-genital contact
* It develops in three stages but third stage syphilis is very rare in the UK
* The first symptom is small, painless sore in the genital or anal area called a chancre
* Symptoms can progress to include a non-itchy rash on the palms or soles of the feet, small skin growths, flu-like symptoms, swollen glands, weight loss and patchy hair loss
* If left untreated can cause serious illness and even death
* Diagnosis usually involves an examination, followed by swabs (if there are sores) and a blood test
* The only way to protect yourself is to use condoms every time you have sex
* If caught early, it can be treated with an antibiotic injection (often penicillin) or other forms of antibiotics
* Statistics for 2014 showed that of all the STIs, syphilis had seen the sharpest rise – with a 33% increase in diagnoses.

## Thrush is a yeast infection that is caused by a fungus that lives naturally in the body. It’s not a sexually transmitted infection, but it can be passed on during sex.

Most men won’t get thrush, but it’s estimated that three out of four women will develop it at some point in their lives. It is a very common cause of unusual vaginal discharge.

Thrush symptoms can be caused by a number of triggers, for example, antibiotics, pregnancy, using products that cause irritation to the vagina such as highly perfumed bubble bath or vaginal deodorant. Sometimes thrush can happen if you have other illnesses – for example uncontrolled diabetes.