

STI Testing Options: when no symptoms are present

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: If you are trying to decide whether to test for sexually transmitted infections (STI) and you don't have symptoms, we recommend you carefully consider your own risk factors, the test options, cost, and health insurance coverage. (Note: most insurance companies do not cover the cost of screening tests in the absence of symptoms.) The good news about testing is that most STIs can be treated (if not cured) when detected early.

Any sexually-active person is at risk for STIs; but though everyone should consider testing, some individuals are at greater risk. Below you will find **testing guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** which are formulated based on national prevalence data. STI prevalence on the Cornell campus may differ, as may the level of risk assumed by any individual. (Risk is really a function of "what you do," not "who you are.") If you have questions about your own level of risk, please discuss them with your health-care provider in order to make an informed decision about your need for testing.

Chlamydia

C

This common bacterial infection is often present without symptoms. If untreated, it can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), in women, inflammation of the prostate, in men, and impaired fertility. It is easily treated with antibiotics.

Testing is recommended for:

- all vaginally sexually active women 25 yrs old or younger, regardless if there has been a change in partner since last testing.
- women over 26 with new or multiple sex partners.
- pregnant women.
- sexually-active men with more than one partner, or inconsistent condom use.
- men who have [unprotected] sex with men.

The Test: women- can be tested during pelvic exam, or with a urine sample
men- a swab from the urethra or a urine sample; the urine test is most accurate

Approximate Cost	
swab	\$16
urine	\$30
prices subject to change	

Gonorrhea

C

This bacterial infection is less common than chlamydia. Infected men often have symptoms, but not always. Women have more infections without symptoms. If untreated, it can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), in women, inflammation of the prostate, in men, and impaired fertility. It is easily cured with antibiotics.

Testing is recommended for:

- men and women with more than one sexual partner (male or female) in the past year.
- individuals with a history of chlamydia, gonorrhea, or PID in the past two years.
- men who have [unprotected] sex with men. (Pharyngeal swabs recommended annually.)
- pregnant women.

The Test: women- can be tested during pelvic exam or with a urine sample
men- a swab from the urethra or a urine sample; the urine test is most accurate

Approximate Cost	
swab	\$16
urine	\$30
prices subject to change	

Hepatitis B

T

Like Hepatitis A and C, this viral infection affects the liver. It is spread through blood, semen, and vaginal secretions. Early stages of hepatitis often have no symptoms. Infection can lead to chronic infection or liver disease. There are treatments for liver disease, but no cure for hepatitis. Many young people today have completed the HBV vaccination series of three shots, making them immune to the disease.

Many experts do not recommend testing people without symptoms; others advise testing:

- men who have [unprotected] sex with men.
- individuals who share needles.
- individuals born in areas with high incidence of hepatitis (talk with your clinician).
- individuals with multiple sexual partners.

The Test: blood test for men or women

Note: If you have not yet been vaccinated against hepatitis B, we highly recommend beginning or finishing the vaccination series (available at Gannett). Hep A vaccine also recommended for men who have sex with men.

Approximate Cost	
blood	\$50
price subject to change	



Think prevention: Transmission of all STIs can be greatly-reduced with the use of condoms (male or female), latex squares, or other barriers.

Think relief: T = symptoms treatable C = curable (Note: symptoms of all STIs can be treated; only non-viral infections can be cured.)



Herpes

T

This common viral infection causes recurring sores around the mouth (i.e., cold sores) and in the genital region. Any skin-to-skin contact can transmit the virus, even when sores are not present. Cold sores can transmit herpes to the genitals. There is no cure for herpes, but medications can decrease symptoms and either prevent or lessen severity of recurrent outbreaks. Testing in asymptomatic cases will only show if you have been exposed to the virus. It cannot predict if you will ever have symptoms or spread the infection.

Testing is recommended for:

- those who are HIV positive.
- those who are in a relationship with someone who has a known history of genital herpes.

The Test: in individuals without symptoms, a blood test

Approximate Cost

general \$100
type-specific \$200

[prices subject to change](#)

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

T

This viral infection is spread through blood, semen, vaginal secretions, and breast milk. Usually, no symptoms are apparent for years after infection. The virus can be spread when no symptoms are present. Ask your clinician about prophylaxis treatment if you think you have been exposed. There is no cure, but medications can decrease transmission and slow progression of the virus.

Testing is recommended for:

- Any individual seeking evaluation and treatment for STIs

The Tests: blood test or oral swab (Both methods test for antibodies.)

Note: HIV tests at Gannett are confidential. A nurse or clinician can refer you for free and anonymous testing if desired. HIV testing is most reliable three months after exposure. HIV testing requires a follow-up visit for results.

Approximate Cost

blood \$25
oral swab \$45

[prices subject to change](#)

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)

T

This very common virus has no symptoms for most people. Most sexually-active individuals will be (or have already been) exposed to HPV. Sexual partners often transmit the virus without knowing it. Some strains cause warts in the genital area. Others infect the cervix of women, or anus of men or women, and can occasionally lead to cancer if undetected. In most healthy people, the body's defenses are strong enough to "clear" the infection without treatment.

Cervical Pap smear testing is currently recommended for:

- women who have been sexually-active for three or more years.
- women for whom it has been more than a year since their last normal Pap smear.
- women over age 21 who have never had a Pap smear.

Anal Pap smear testing is still being evaluated for:

- men or women who have receptive anal sex.

The Test: A clinician can look for signs of genital warts in both men and women. Pap smears can detect abnormal cells of the cervix or anus that may be related to HPV. (Note: almost all health insurance plans, including SHIP, cover annual cervical pap smears.)

Note: Vaccination is available to protect against four sub-types of HPV. If interested, ask your clinician.

Approximate Cost

visual exam free
cervical pap \$50
anal pap \$200

Note: cervical paps are covered by most plans
[prices subject to change](#)

Syphilis

C

This infection is caused by a spirochete bacteria. It has become relatively uncommon in the United States, although infections are reportedly more frequent among men who have sex with men. Syphilis often has no recognizable symptoms, but it may cause painless ulcers (often in the genital area), a rash, or swollen glands. It is easily cured with antibiotics during the early stages.

Testing is recommended for:

- pregnant women.
- men who have [unprotected] sex with men and, if applicable, any of their female partners.
- sex workers and their partners.
- individuals in correctional facilities and their partners.

The Test: blood test, best done one to three months after exposure

Approximate Cost

blood \$30

[price subject to change](#)

Trichomoniasis (Trich)

C

This infection, caused by a protozoan, often has symptoms including itching or irritation of the vagina or urethra. Copious vaginal discharge is common. Infection is sometimes asymptomatic in women, and often without symptoms in men. Medication can cure it.

Testing is recommended for:

- men who have discharge from, and/or itching or irritation of the penis.
- women who have unusual vaginal discharge, itching or vaginal pain.
- any sexually-active individual who has a partner diagnosed with trich.

The Test: samples of vaginal or urethral secretions examined under the microscope

Approximate Cost

swab free with exam

[price subject to change](#)



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Prices current as of 10/07