

## Sexual Health Tips For MSM\*

Being healthy requires tending to every dimension of your physical and emotional well-being. This fact sheet highlights some general strategies you can incorporate in order to boost one important component of your well-being: your sexual health.

**Stay safe.** You've heard it before but, *when used consistently during oral or anal intercourse*, condoms can significantly reduce the risk of contracting HIV, gonorrhea, syphilis, and chlamydia. They are your most reliable form of protection (if you're not already in a long-term, mutually-monogamous relationship). However, herpes and Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), the virus that causes genital warts and some anal cancers, can be transmitted by any skin-to-skin contact. Gannett's STI testing sheet provides detailed information about most of the more common sexually transmitted infections.

### In the news: Spring, 2008

Recent media attention has highlighted some distinct health trends among sub-populations of men who have sex with men.

- **Increased incidence of syphilis and HIV** have been noted in populations of MSM in large metropolitan areas (e.g. Philadelphia, New York, Chicago) and even here in Tompkins County due to increased incidence of unprotected sexual contact. The risk of syphilis and HIV transmission can be greatly reduced by the proper use of condoms (and lubricants) during any penetrative sexual activity (oral and anal).
- **Sexually-transmitted cases of "MRSA,"** a skin infection caused by bacteria called staphylococcus, have been reported among MSM. These infections are spread by skin-to-skin contact. They are often resistant to several antibiotics, but can still be treated. If you develop a rash or boil, please seek evaluation. Appointments can be made at Gannett by calling 255-5155. Protective health behaviors that help reduce the risk of MRSA include frequent handwashing, and showering/washing after sexual activity.

Gannett staff are alert to health trends that may affect MSM and are always willing to answer questions about infection transmission/prevention.

Talk with your sexual partner(s) about their health status (and yours) so you can make informed decisions about sexual protection. You also schedule a free appointment with Gannett's Clinical Counselor to learn more about ways to lower the risks, and increase the pleasure, of sexual activity. (See contact information on reverse side.)

**Stay smart.** For some people, alcohol and other recreational drugs may make a night out seem more enjoyable, but because they reduce inhibitions, they may significantly increase sexual risk-taking behaviors. If you decide to drink or use, stick to an amount you can safely handle. If you find this is difficult, consider meeting with one of Gannett's BASICS providers. They are available to talk with students who want to explore their alcohol and other drug use in a judgment-free environment. (See contact information on reverse side.) Bottom line: if you're planning to drink or use, be sure to bring protection, and commit to using it.

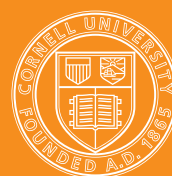
**Get tested.** Schedule regular medical check-ups and testing for STI's whenever there's a chance you may have been exposed. Many infections can be easily cured. Others can be treated much more effectively if caught early. Because of national prevalence data, the CDC recommends the following tests for MSM:

- HIV antibody testing
- Gonorrhea (oral and rectal swab, urethral swab or urine test)
- Chlamydia (urethral swab or urine test)
- Syphilis (blood test)

Testing should be performed yearly for men in mutually-monogamous relationships, and every 3-6 months for men with multiple partners. There is currently no national recommendation for anal pap smears, which test for precancerous changes due to HPV, but many experts and LGBT health centers recommend such testing every 2-3 years.



\*MSM= men who have sex with men



**Get vaccinated.** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that MSM get vaccinated for both Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B, as both can be transmitted sexually. The vaccines are highly effective. Call Gannett at 255-5155 for an immunization appointment if you have not had these vaccinations. Students under the age of 19 can qualify for low-cost vaccine at Gannett through a federally-funded program.

**Be aware.** Sexual assault doesn't just happen to women. Men also experience sexual assault and can be victims of intimate partner violence. If you or someone you know is assaulted, seek medical attention and consider talking with the Victim Advocate at Gannett about your options and for support. (See contact information at right.)

**We care.** Learn more about Gannett's services and philosophy by visiting [www.gannett.cornell.edu](http://www.gannett.cornell.edu). There, you can read about our comprehensive sexual health services, our commitment to integrated care, and our focus on patient/client satisfaction (e.g., our patient advocacy program and 24/7 phone consultation service). Although this sheet addresses sexual health, we have a variety of other services and information to support other dimensions of your well-being. Please talk with us about how we can best support you in reaching your personal health goal. Gannett is a proud co-sponsor of the Safe Place Project. Our staff strives to create a supportive environment in which everyone feels welcome and is provided with the best possible care. If you have comments, suggestions, or concerns that will improve our service and/or make you more comfortable, we want to hear from you. Please submit your feedback to [gannett@cornell.edu](mailto:gannett@cornell.edu), or contact a Patient Advocate at 255-3564.

<b>Know your health resources.</b>	
<i>Phone numbers:</i>	
Gannett Health Services	
• 24/7 Phone Consultation	255-5155
• BASICS (education/support regarding alcohol or other drugs)	255-4782
• Clinical Counseling (Sex Counseling)	255-4782
• Immunizations	255-5155
• General medical or counseling	255-5155
• Patient Advocate	255-3564
• Pharmacy	254-6337 (4-MEDS)
• Victim Advocate	255-1212
National STD and AIDS Hotline:	
• English	800-342-2437
• Spanish	800-344-7432
National Herpes Hotline	919-361-8488
National HPV Prevention Hotline	877-HPV-5868
Southern Tier AIDS Program	607 272-4098
Planned Parenthood of the Southern Fingerlakes	607 273-1513
<i>Web resources:</i>	
Gannett Health Services	<a href="http://www.gannett.cornell.edu">www.gannett.cornell.edu</a>
• Review the Top 10 Topics	
• Link to Gannett's fact sheet regarding testing for Sexually Transmitted Infections in the absence of symptoms: <a href="http://www.gannett.cornell.edu">www.gannett.cornell.edu</a> [Search "STI testing"]	
American Social Health Association (ASHA)	<a href="http://www.ashastd.org">www.ashastd.org</a>
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov">www.cdc.gov</a>
• link to the CDC fact sheet regarding syphilis and MSM: <a href="http://www.cdc.gov">www.cdc.gov</a> [Search "MSM & Syphilis"]	
Gay Men's Health	<a href="http://www.gmhp.demon.co.uk/guides/std">www.gmhp.demon.co.uk/guides/std</a>
Planned Parenthood of America	<a href="http://www.plannedparenthood.org">www.plannedparenthood.org</a>
Trans Health	<a href="http://www.trans-health.com">www.trans-health.com</a>

**Fall and Spring Semester Hours:**

Monday-Friday	8:30 am-5:00 pm
Saturday	10:00 am-4:00pm
Sunday	building closed

Check the web for hours during breaks, winter and summer sessions: [www.gannett.cornell.edu](http://www.gannett.cornell.edu)

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