What do you need to know about STIs?

- Most people with either of these STIs do not have symptoms.
- Teenagers and younger adults are more likely to get an STI if exposed.
- Chlamydia and gonorrhea are both easy to treat in the early stages. If left untreated, an infection can cause serious health problems:
  - Pelvic infections (pus and pain in the uterus). This can result in pelvic pain, infertility (unable to get pregnant), or damage to the fallopian tubes, which increases the risk for an ectopic pregnancy (a pregnancy in the fallopian tube) if a woman gets pregnant.
  - Discharge from the penis and inflammation of the testes in men.
  - Serious infections in infants born to infected mothers.

How are these STIs diagnosed?
Chlamydia and gonorrhea can be diagnosed with a visit to your health care provider. There is one test that checks for both chlamydia and gonorrhea.

Who should be tested?

For women and men: If you may have been exposed to someone with chlamydia and/or gonorrhea.

For women:
Sexually active women should be tested:
- Age 24 and under: Every year
- Over age 24: Every year if at increased risk (see risk factors below)

For men:
Sexually active men of any age who are at increased risk should be tested every year (see risk factors below)

What are the risk factors for STIs?
The following increases your risk for getting an STI, including chlamydia and gonorrhea:
- Personal history of an STI
- Unprotected sex (not using a condom every time you have sex)
- Sex with a new partner
- Sex with multiple partners
- Sex with a high-risk partner (IV drug user, exchanging sex for money)

What tests should be done?

For women:
Urine test or vaginal swab. Throat swab if you’ve given oral sex; rectal swab if you’ve received anal sex or oral-anal sex.

For men:
Urine test. Throat swab if you’ve given oral sex; rectal swab if you’ve received anal sex or oral-anal sex.

If you are age 14 or older, testing is confidential. Information is not given to anyone but you. If you are age 13 or younger, information may be shared with your parents.

What is the treatment if you have an infection?

Antibiotics are usually prescribed to treat chlamydia and gonorrhea.

If you have an STI, you need to tell your sex partner. He or she will need to be treated as well. You and your partner should be treated at the same time to avoid passing the infection back and forth to one another.

Talk to your provider about when you should be tested again for STIs.
How can you lower your risk?
If you have sex, be safe and protect yourself. Avoid high-risk sexual behaviors. Talk openly with your partner about what you can both do to lower your risk of getting an STI. The only way to prevent getting any STI is to not have sex.

For more information
The Kaiser Permanente Consulting Nurse Service is available to Kaiser Permanente members who have medical questions or concerns. Call 24 hours a day toll-free 1-800-297-6877.
Visit the Health and Wellness Resources section on the Kaiser Permanente website at kp.org/wa for information on a variety of health topics.

Chlamydia and Gonorrhea Testing

- What you should know about sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Who should get tested
- What increases your risk

Coverage may vary by plan. For benefits refer to your coverage agreement or contact Member Services at 1-888-901-4636.