



## April is STI Awareness Month

Dear Valued Patient,

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) have been increasing, and now, at an all-time high, they demand our attention more than ever.<sup>1</sup> The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported 26 million newly acquired STIs in 2018, estimating that 1 in 5 people in the US had an STI on any given day that year.<sup>2,3</sup> The ongoing rise of STIs can pose a serious threat to women.<sup>2</sup>

Two of the most common STIs, chlamydia and gonorrhea, are bacterial infections that can be spread through sexual contact. The latest CDC data revealed, 5.6 million new chlamydia and gonorrhea cases in the United States in 2018, affecting young people more than any other age group.<sup>2</sup> Over 84% of chlamydia and gonorrhea infections are asymptomatic and, if left undiagnosed and untreated, can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease and infertility.<sup>4,5</sup>

The good news is that these infections typically can be easily treated, so getting tested is just part of staying healthy. The CDC has also identified a highly prevalent STI called *Mycoplasma genitalium* (M. gen).<sup>6</sup> It is important to be aware of M. gen because it shares similar symptoms to chlamydia and gonorrhea, but the treatment is different.<sup>7-9</sup> This is why it's important to talk to your healthcare provider about which tests are right for you.

There are several guidelines for STI testing based on your age range.

- **15-24 years old:** Receive annual chlamydia and gonorrhea testing if you are sexually active. You may require testing for other STIs depending on your sexual activity and/or other risk factors.<sup>10</sup>
- **25-45 years old:** Chlamydia and gonorrhea screening is recommended for women at increased risk of infection and HIV testing may also be required.<sup>10</sup>
  - Acquiring a new sex partner
  - Having more than one sex partner
  - Having a sex partner with concurrent partners
  - Inconsistent condom use in non-monogamous relationship
  - Having a sex partner who has an STI

STI testing is an important part of protecting your reproductive health and fertility. Your provider may recommend certain testing based on your age, while other tests may be right for you depending on the presence of symptoms or if you have an increased level of risk. Getting tested is easy—all your provider needs is a simple, painless sample using a self-collected or clinician-collected vaginal swab or a urine test. During STI Awareness Month we want women to feel empowered to take control of their health. We encourage all women to reach out to their healthcare provider to schedule their well-woman exam for 2024. Your well-woman visit is covered by the Affordable Care Act\*, meaning there may be no co-pay, deductible, or out-of-pocket cost.<sup>11</sup>

**Call today to schedule your well-woman exam!**

Best regards,

\* Patients should consult their healthcare plans to verify coverage.

**References:** **1.** CDC. Reported STDs Reach All-time High for 6th Consecutive Year. Last reviewed: April 13, 2021. Accessed February 20, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/p0413-stds.html> **2.** CDC. Incidence, Prevalence, and Cost of Sexually Transmitted Infection in the United States. Last reviewed: March 16, 2022. Accessed February 20, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/newsroom/fact-sheets/std/sti-Incidence-Prevalence-Cost-Factsheet.html#print> **3.** Kreisel, et al. Sexually Transmitted Infections Among US Women and Men: Prevalence and Incidence Estimates, 2018. Sexually Transmitted Diseases: April 2021-Volume 48-Issue 4-p 208-214 doi: 10.1097/OLQ.0000000000001355. **4.** Detels R, Green AM, Klausner JD, et al. The incidence and correlates of symptomatic and asymptomatic Chlamydia trachomatis and Neisseria gonorrhoeae infections in selected populations in five countries. Sex Transm Dis. 2011;38(6):503-509. **5.** Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) - CDC Fact Sheet. <https://www.cdc.gov/std/pid/stdfact-pid.htm> Last reviewed: April 18, 2022. Accessed February 20, 2024. **6.** Workowski, et al. Sexually Transmitted Infections Treatment Guidelines 2021. MMWR Recomm Rep 2021;70. **7.** CDC. Chlamydia Fact Sheet. Center for Disease Control and Prevention website. Last reviewed February 15, 2023. Accessed February 20, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/std/chlamydia/stdfact-chlamydia.htm> **8.** CDC. Gonorrhea Fact Sheet. Center for Disease Control and Prevention website. Last reviewed February 15, 2023. Accessed February 20, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/std/gonorrhoea/stdfact-gonorrhoea.htm> **9.** CDC. M. gen Fact Sheet. Center for Disease Control and Prevention website. Last reviewed February 15, 2023. Accessed February 20, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/std/mgen/stdfact-Mgen.htm> **10.** CDC. Sexually Transmitted Treatment Guidelines. <https://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment-guidelines/screening-recommendations.htm> Last reviewed: June 5, 2022. Accessed February 20, 2024. **11.** CDC. Prevention Through Health Care: Preventive Service Tables. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/preventionthroughhealthcare/preventiveservices/std.htm>. Last reviewed May 5, 2020. Accessed February 20, 2024.



# STI Awareness Month

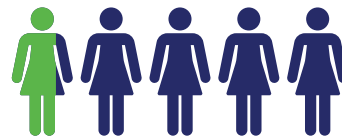
## April is STI Awareness Month

April is here, and with it comes STI Awareness month - a crucial time to address a growing concern. Considering the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) latest estimates, indicating that in 2018, 1 in 5 people in the United States had an STI on any given day that year, we must collectively raise awareness and take action to curb this alarming threat to women's health and well-being.<sup>1</sup>

The CDC reported the following statistics:

**5.6 million**

New chlamydia and gonorrhea cases estimated every year.<sup>1</sup>



**18.9% prevalence** of *Mycoplasma genitalium* in women.<sup>2</sup>

**2.6 million**

New cases of trichomoniasis in the US.<sup>1</sup>

These infections, when left undiagnosed and untreated, can lead to serious complications such as pelvic inflammatory disease and infertility.<sup>3</sup> Shockingly, an estimated 24,000 women each year face infertility due to undiagnosed STIs.<sup>4</sup> We share a common mission to change these statistics.

Throughout the year, we remain dedicated to providing comprehensive diagnostic services for STIs. We firmly believe that early and accurate diagnosis is instrumental to preventing disease spread and safeguarding reproductive health. As we work together to empower women to protect their future, we encourage you to share this patient letter reminding them of the importance of scheduling a well-woman exam.

Thank you for your unwavering partnership as we unite to observe STI Awareness Month and work together to provide the highest level of patient care.

Best Regards,

**References:** **1.** CDC. Incidence, Prevalence, and Cost of Sexually Transmitted Infection in the United States. Last reviewed: March 16, 2022. Accessed January 26, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/newsroom/fact-sheets/std/STIIncidence-Prevalence-Cost-Factsheet.html> **2.** Manhart, L, et al. *Mycoplasma genitalium* in the US (MyGeniUS): Surveillance Data From Sexual Health Clinics in 4 US Regions. [CID]. 2023; 77 (10):1449–1459. Published July 4, 2023. Accessed February 28, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cid/ciad405>. **3.** Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) - CDC Fact Sheet. <https://www.cdc.gov/std/pid/stdfact-pid.htm> Last reviewed: April 18, 2022. Accessed January 26, 2024. **4.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Sexually Transmitted Infections Among Young Americans. [https://www.cdc.gov/std/products/infographics/images/Youth-STI-Infographic\\_620.jpg](https://www.cdc.gov/std/products/infographics/images/Youth-STI-Infographic_620.jpg) Published April 2013. Accessed February 22, 2024.