Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are a major health concern. They are caused by germs that are passed between people during sex. Anyone can get an STI, but young people (15-24 years) and men who have sex with other men have a higher chance. Sex can mean vaginal, anal, or oral sex.

STIs are more common than most people think. In the United States, about 20 million new STIs happen every year. Some common, curable STIs are:

- **Chlamydia**: 1.5 million people got chlamydia in 2015
- **Gonorrhea**: 395,000 people got gonorrhea in 2015
- **Trichomoniasis**: 3.7 million people have trichomoniasis, and about 1.1 million people get the infection each year

### Why Testing Matters

- Testing matters because these STIs can be treated easily and inexpensively. And curing them can prevent more problems for you and your loved ones.
- Although STIs can cause symptoms (see sidebar), they often do not. So you or your sex partner could have an STI and not even know. This means it is easy to give an STI to someone you have sex with, and easy to catch one from someone you have sex with.
- Women may not find out they have an STI until problems like pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) occur. PID can cause infertility (not being able to get pregnant). It can also cause ectopic pregnancy (when a fertilized egg starts growing outside the womb).
- Pregnant women can give STIs to their babies. This can cause babies to be born too early or have problems in their eyes or lungs after being born.
- If you have one STI, it is easier to catch another.

The good news is that these STIs are easy to treat. So even if you don't think you have an STI, you should find out if you or the people you have sex with have an STI. It is important for keeping your body healthy, as well as not giving an STI to your sex partner(s).
Symptoms of STIs

If you or the person you have sex with has any of these symptoms, talk to your HCP about testing:

- Painful, cloudy, or increased urination
- Sores on the penis or vagina
- Unusual discharge from the vagina or penis, or bleeding between periods
- Abdominal/pelvic pain (women)
- Pain and swelling in one testicle
- Rectal pain, discharge, itching, or bleeding

References