



THE M FACTOR'S GUIDE

TO



STIs

Sexually Transmitted Infections

for gay, bi, and bi-curious guys



brought to you by



THE M FACTOR
EL PASO, TX




The M Factor's Guide to STIs is meant to be a tool for young gay, bi, and bi-curious guys to better help you understand the various types of Sexually Transmitted Infections, how they are transmitted, what they can do to you; and what types of treatments are available, and of course how to protect yourself. This is a quick and easy to read reference to help you take charge of your sex life.

Warning: This booklet contains HIV and STI prevention information targeting gay and bisexual men. Because HIV and STIs are spread primarily through sexual contact or by sharing needles, prevention messages in this guide may address these topics in a frank nature that may not be appropriate for minors.


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In this guide we will refer to each STI by the type of infection it is. Every STI is different and will infect you in a different way. Here are some definitions to help you understand the different types of STIs.



Bacteria: A bacteria is a small single cell organism that can live inside or outside of your body. Bacterial infections can be very nasty but can often be cured with antibiotics if they are caught early.



Parasite: A parasite is a small organism that lives off a bigger organism. Parasites are very easy to spread but are also relatively easy to kill. Parasites may carry bacteria and viruses which may cause more harm.



Virus: Unlike bacteria and parasites, a virus is a tiny microscopic bundle of proteins that contain instructions inside. A virus uses your body's cells to copy itself and make your body malfunction. Very few viruses are curable and most will remain in your body for the rest of your life. Treatments are available for viral infections.

Chlamydia

kla-mid-eeah



Type of infection: Bacterial

What does it infect? Penis, anus, vagina, throat.

Transmitted by: Unprotected oral, anal, or vaginal sex.

What Happens?

Guys: White watery discharge from your penis; itching or pain from the penis opening usually 1 to 3 weeks after exposure. Some guys may not feel any symptoms at all.

Girls: pelvic or abdominal pain, vaginal discharge, fever.

How is it Treated?

Antibiotics prescribed by a healthcare professional. It is important that you finish all of the medication your healthcare provider gives you, even if you feel better, to make sure all of the bacteria is gone.

Chlamydia can come back even worse if you stop the

treatment ahead of time.

Prevention:

Using condoms every time for anal, oral, and vaginal sex, getting tested regularly, and talking to your sex partners about STIs are great ways to prevent getting infected with Chlamydia.



Crabs



like the seafood

Type of Infection: Parasitic

Crabs are tiny organisms like lice that live outside the body and can spread easily from one person to another.

What does it infect? Pubic area, or any area with hair.

Transmitted by: Close contact. Crabs can also jump from one person to another.

What Happens:

Guys: A lot of of itching, especially where you have body hair.

Girls: same as guys.

How is it Treated?

Over-the-counter lice medication and a nit comb. Use

the treatment in your hair, beard, or eyebrows if the crabs have crawled in there. If you find crab eggs in your eyebrows, rub Vaseline on each eyebrow to kill the eggs. Wash all of your clothes, bedding, and towels in hot water to kill off crabs and their eggs.

Prevention:

Avoid any close contact with anyone that has crabs.



Gonorrhea

gone-a-ree-ah



Type of Infection: Bacterial

What does it infect? Penis, anus, throat and vagina.

In women it can also infect the upper genital tract and sometimes the infection can spread throughout the whole body.

Transmitted by: Unprotected oral, vaginal, or anal sex. Touching an infected person's genitals or anus then your own can also transmit gonorrhea.

What Happens:

Guys: Discharge in the penis, sore throat, burning feeling when you urinate, bleeding or discharge from your anus.

Girls: Sore throat, burning sensation when you urinate, pelvic pain, fever.

Generally, symptoms will appear within 2-10 days after exposure. Some people don't get symptoms, so

it's important to get tested regularly.

How is it Treated?

Antibiotics delivered as a shot or by pills. Testing for Gonorrhea involves getting your anus, throat, and/or vagina swabbed and collecting urine in a cup.

Prevention:

Using condoms every time for anal, oral, and vaginal sex, getting tested regularly, and talking to your sex partners about STIs are great ways to prevent yourself from getting gonorrhea.



Hepatitis (B/C)

hep-a-tight-is



Type of Infection: Viral

There are 2 kinds of Hepatitis viruses that can be transmitted sexually. Each is transmitted differently, but they both affect your liver. Since they are viral infections, Hepatitis can be treated but not cured. It's important to know that your liver is an organ that gets rid of toxins in your body. Without it, your body can poison itself.

What does it infect? Liver.

Transmitted by:

Hep B is transmitted by blood or semen, usually by unprotected anal, oral, or vaginal sex, or by injecting yourself with dirty needles.

Hep C is transmitted by blood, usually by having unprotected anal or vaginal sex or using dirty needles.

What Happens:

Guys & Girls: Flu-like symptoms, yellow eyes, dark pee, and light stools (poop). Some people will not experience symptoms until their liver has been badly damaged.

How is it Treated?

Rest and eating healthy can treat Hepatitis B in the short term. Complex anti-viral treatments are available for Hepatitis C. People infected with HIV AND Hepatitis B and C must take treatments for both infections.

Prevention:

Hepatitis B can be prevented with a vaccine, but there is no vaccine for Hepatitis C. Using condoms for anal/oral sex, using clean works, and using sterilized needles for tattoos and piercings can prevent Hepatitis C transmission. Use a dental dam for rimming or latex gloves for fingering as well as washing your hands after sex.

Herpes

her-pees



Type of infection: Viral

There are two types of Herpes that are transmitted sexually. Oral Herpes (HSV-1) and Genital Herpes (HSV-2). Both types can appear anywhere in the body but HSV-1 is found mainly around the mouth and HSV-2 is found mainly around the anus, penis, or vagina.

What does it infect? Mouth, anus, penis or vagina.

Transmitted by:

Contact with an infected person's mouth or genitals (penis, anus, vagina). If someone has an outbreak of sores or blisters, the chances of transmission are greater but Herpes can also be transmitted when there are no outbreaks.

What Happens:

Guys & Girls: Small painful blisters or sores will ap-

pear in the infected area. Before an outbreak, you may feel itching and tingling around the mouth, penis, anus, or vagina, however outbreaks can happen anywhere on your body. Some people don't have symptoms but still carry the virus.

How is it Treated?

Anti-viral treatments are available to limit outbreaks of herpes which can decrease transmission. However, the herpes virus will remain in your body.

Prevention:

Using condoms for anal, oral, and vaginal sex can reduce your risk of transmitting Herpes. Herpes can be transmitted by skin-to-skin contact even with no sores or blisters present so it is important to get tested for Herpes regularly.



HIV

eich-eye-vee

Type of infection: Viral



HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HIV weakens a person's immune system making it hard to fight off infections that people with healthy immune systems can keep under control. HIV can take years before any symptoms are noticeable. Most people pass the virus because they don't know they are infected. If not treated, HIV infection can develop into AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), which is very serious and can lead to death. This is why getting tested regularly for HIV is so important.

What does it infect? Immune System.

Transmitted by:

Blood, semen, vaginal fluids, and breast milk. Anal and/or vaginal sex without condoms and sharing dirty needles are the most common ways to transmit HIV.

What Happens:

Guys & Girls: About 50% of those infected will feel flu-like symptoms within 2-4 weeks of exposure. The remainder of those infected will not feel anything right away. Over time, symptoms may include feeling tired all the time (fatigue) with fever, headache, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, and rash. Symptoms vary depending on how damaged the immune system is.

How is it Treated?

Antiviral medications. HIV infection cannot be cured because it is a virus. An effective vaccine has not yet been found. Treatment is effective in helping people with HIV infection live longer and healthier lives. Medications must be taken at the same time every day in order to keep the virus from mutating.

Prevention:

Using condoms every time for anal, oral and vaginal sex is your best defense against HIV. Avoid getting semen and blood in your body and mucous membranes (like your mouth, eyes, nose and anus). Talking to your sex partners about HIV and getting tested regularly are also smart ways to prevent HIV.

HPV

eich-pee-vee



Type of infection: Viral

HPV stands for Human Papilloma Virus and it causes Genital Warts in guys. and girls, as well as cancers of the genital area.

What does it infect? Anus, penis, mouth or vagina.

Transmitted by:

Contact between mucous membranes (like your penis, anus and mouth) and an infected part of the body. HPV is similar to Herpes because you can pass it even if you don't have warts by touching the infected area.

What Happens:

Small cauliflower-shaped bumps clumped together may develop in the anus, penis, or even around the

mouth. Anal warts can cause bleeding when you have anal sex or use the restroom. If left untreated HPV can cause anal cancer in guys and cervical cancer in girls.

How is it Treated?

Topical treatments or surgery by a healthcare professional. Using over-the-counter wart removers for your hands or face is not recommended. Because HPV is a virus, the warts may come back even after they're removed.

Prevention:

A vaccine to protect against HPV is available for guys and girls up to age 26.



Scabies

skay-bees



Type of infection: Parasitic

Scabies are small parasites that dig into your skin and lay eggs in places like your groin, but also in your fingers and elbows.

What does it infect? Skin.

Transmitted by:

Close contact with someone that has scabies. Sharing clothes, beds, towels, and even dry humping can transmit scabies.

What Happens:

After coming into contact with someone that has scabies, expect a lot of itching. Short wavy brown lines will develop on your skin about 10 days after exposure.

How is it Treated?

Medicated lotions prescribed by a healthcare professional can kill the scabies and their eggs in your skin. Also, wash all clothing, bedding, and towels and hang your dry clothes for 2 weeks before wearing them again.

Prevention:

Avoid close contact and sharing clothes, towels or beds with someone that has scabies.



Syphilis

Sif-ill-is



Type of infection: Bacterial

Syphilis is a blood infection that happens in 3 stages. It is treatable if caught within the first 2 stages, but can cause brain damage and even lead to death if it is not treated.

What does it infect? Blood.

Transmitted by:

Unprotected anal, oral, or vaginal sex with someone that has syphilis. Can also be transmitted by skin-to-skin contact through a chancre (shank-er) sore.

What Happens:

Gays and Girls: After exposure, a small but painless sore called a chancre will appear and will disappear in 4-6 weeks. This is the first stage. In the second stage, a rash will appear on the palms of your hands or soles on your feet. In the 3rd stage,

syphilis attacks the nervous stem, brain, spinal cord and heart. Some people may not show any symptoms.

How is it Treated?

Antibiotics given either as a shot or pills by a health-care professional.

Prevention:

Using condoms for anal, oral, and vaginal sex.

Getting tested regularly for syphilis and talking to your sex partners about syphilis are also smart ways to prevent it.



Getting Tested

Now that you know what kinds of STIs are out there, it's a good idea to get tested regularly, especially if you have a lot of sex partners. Remember that getting tested is the only way to know for sure if you have an STI. Because STIs are different, they appear in your body in different ways and at different times. Use the screening schedule below as a guide for when to get tested.

HIV.....	3-6 months
Syphilis.....	3-6 months
Herpes.....	6 months
Hepatitis	6 months
Hepatitis C.....	12 months
Gonorrhea.....	6 months
Chlamydia.....	6 months

Remember that talking to your sex partners about sexually transmitted infections and having them get tested are smart ways you can prevent the spread of HIV and STIs.

Testing Resources

Aliviane, Inc. (Free HIV Testing)

915.782.4042

Monday - Friday: 7722 North Loop
8:00-5:00pm

City of El Paso Department of Public Health - HIV Prevention Program (Free HIV & Syphilis Testing)

915.771.5888

Tuesdays: 5115 El Paso Drive. Suite B
8-11am and 1-4pm

Wednesdays and Fridays: 222 S. Campbell
8-11am and 1-4pm

International AIDS Empowerment (Free HIV Testing)

915.590.2118

Monday - Friday: 800 Montana Ave.
10am-4pm

La Fe CARE Center (Free HIV Testing)

915.772.3366

Monday - Friday: 1505 Mescalero
8:30am-11:30am and 1:30pm-4:30pm

University Medical Center Male Clinic (STI Screening)

915.532.5454

Tuesdays: 4824 Alberta Suite 403
4:30pm - 7pm

ABOUT THE M FACTOR

The M Factor is a social organization for young gay and bi guys in El Paso. It provides a safe and comfortable environment for guys to express themselves, support each other, and take charge of important issues. The M Factor is composed of a 10-12 member decision body called the Core Group and provides formal and informal outreach, safer sex talk meetings called "Lets Talk About Sex," and other forms of community involvement.

The M Factor is housed at The Factory located at 1505 East Missouri Ave. Drop in hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00pm to 7:00pm and every 2nd and 4th Saturday from 1:00pm to 5:00pm.

For more information on how you can get involved with El Paso's favorite gay organization, please call 915.351.0969 or visit www.themfactor.org



The M Factor is a service of the City of El Paso Department of Public Health HIV Prevention Program

