

PRIORITY MALE

Staying Healthy



PLANNED PARENTHOOD®
1-800-230-PLAN www.ppnyc.org

Taking care of his body should be one of a man's top priorities. Everyone—men included—should have a yearly check-up because it increases your chances of being informed about infections and diseases, which can help you to live a longer, healthier life.

Make Sure Your Physical Includes Sexual and Reproductive Health

During a man's physical exam, a medical professional should check his testicles and penis. If the man has been sexually active, the medical professional should check for signs of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), such as chlamydia, genital warts, and HIV (the virus that causes AIDS). If the medical professional does not ask if the patient has been sexually active and does not do this check, it is important for the patient to ask to be checked for STIs.

Sexually Transmitted Infections

STIs are infections that can be passed through skin-to-skin contact or through the exchange of bodily fluids, such as semen, vaginal fluids, and blood. The most effective way to avoid getting an STI is not to have vaginal, anal, or oral sex.

Men who are sexually active should always wear condoms during sex to protect themselves and their partners from STIs, including HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Some STIs, like chlamydia, have no symptoms. People can have STIs without even knowing it! Other STIs do have symptoms, so it is important for men to check their genital areas for any lumps, blisters, or sores, which may be signs of an STI. A burning sensation while urinating or a discharge or fluid leaking from the opening at the end of the penis is also a possible sign of infection.

Testicular Self-Exam

During a man's physical exam, the medical professional will check for testicular cancer, which is the most common form of cancer among men aged 15-35. But men should also regularly check themselves, because if testicular cancer is detected early, there is a good chance that it can be treated and cured. Men should do this self-exam once a month, starting at the age of 15. A good time is while in the shower or after a shower because the scrotum, the pouch that holds the testicles, will be more relaxed, making it easier to feel the testicles. Just follow these steps:

1. Hold one of your testicles between your thumb and forefinger.
2. Gently roll the testicle between your fingers. On the top back side of the testicle you will feel a ridge, which is the epididymis. This is normal. The front of the testicle should be smooth, firm, and egg-shaped.
3. When finished with one testicle, check the other by repeating the same steps.



Illustration by Peter Soriano

If you feel swelling of the testicles, hardness, pain, discomfort, or a lump about the size of a pea, then you should make an appointment with a medical professional as soon as possible.

The Best Protection

Using condoms is the best way of reducing your risk of infection during sexual activity. Condoms made from latex or polyurethane provide the best protection. Talking about condoms with your partner will increase your chances of using protection every time you have sex.

If you are having intercourse with a female partner, and are not ready to be a parent, you should use a condom **AND SHE SHOULD USE ANOTHER METHOD OF BIRTH CONTROL** to make sure you don't have an unplanned pregnancy. Although condoms offer the best protection against STIs, they are not as effective as some other methods of birth control for preventing pregnancy.

Putting on a Condom

Be sure to read and understand the instructions on the package and check the expiration date before you use a condom.

- Use a condom only once. Use a fresh one for each erection (“hard-on”). Have a good supply available.
- Put the condom on your penis **BEFORE COMING IN CONTACT** with your partner.
- Condoms usually come rolled into a ring shape. They are individually sealed in aluminum foil or plastic. Be careful—don’t tear the condom while unwrapping it. If it is torn, brittle, stiff, or sticky, throw it away and use another.
- To increase sensation you can put a drop or two of lubricant inside the condom.
- Use only water-based lubricants with latex condoms. Oil-based lubricants, such as baby oil and petroleum jelly, will weaken the condom and cause it to tear or break.
- Pull back the foreskin, unless circumcised, before rolling on the condom.
- Place the rolled condom over the tip of the hard penis.
- Leave a half-inch space at the tip to collect semen.
- Pinch the air out of the tip with one hand while placing it on the penis.
- Unroll the condom over the penis with the other hand and roll it all the way down to the base of the penis.

- Smooth out any air bubbles. Friction against air bubbles can make a condom break.
- Lubricating the outside of the condom with a water-based lubricant may increase your partner’s comfort and pleasure.

Taking off a Condom

- Pull out before the penis softens.
- Don’t spill the semen—hold the condom against the base of the penis while you pull out.
- Throw the condom away.
- Wash the penis with soap and water before having sex play again.

Using condoms will be easier, more pleasurable, and more effective if both you and your partner know how to put on and use one. To learn without feeling pressured or embarrassed, practice putting on and taking off a condom on a penis or a penis-shaped object.

Dental Dams

Dental dams are thin square pieces of latex used during oral sex on a woman or oral-anal sex. Dams can be placed on the vulva or the anus when the mouth, lips, or tongue are used to sexually arouse a partner. Like the condom, dams keep partners’ body fluids out of each other’s bodies. They also prevent skin-to-skin contact.



Being Supportive (And Being Supported)

Participating in a successful relationship is all about balancing your needs and someone else's. Here are some ways to strengthen a relationship:

- Listen to your partner's thoughts, feelings, and ideas, and expect to be listened to.
- Be honest and expect honesty.
- Share feelings and expect your partner to share his or hers.
- Allow for differences of opinion. Agree to disagree.
- Be fair and treat your partner as an equal. Expect the same treatment in return.
- Consider your partner's needs and have yours considered.
- Respect your partner's privacy and need for time apart and expect the same in return.
- Respect your partner's need to feel safe and secure and expect the same in return.
- Respect your partner's attitudes toward physical intimacy and her or his readiness (or not) for sex. Always have each other's consent for what you do, and never use pressure to get consent.
- Discuss how both people feel about intimate, sexual activity and what each person wants out of the experience. Be attentive to each other's pleasure.

- Accompany your partner to provide emotional support during a sexual health visit.
- Build trust by getting tested together for HIV and STIs—preferably before you have sex.
- Keep plenty of condoms on hand and encourage your partner to do the same.
- Support your female partner's choice of a contraceptive method. Remind her that the two of you should use condoms to prevent STIs and another method of birth control to prevent an unplanned pregnancy.
- Support your female partner in getting emergency contraception (the “morning-after pill”) if she needs it. Emergency contraception can prevent pregnancy up to 5 days after unprotected sex. Buy emergency contraception at a pharmacy and keep it on hand just in case.
- Talk to your partner about the topics in this brochure: your relationship, sex, STI/HIV protection and testing, pregnancy prevention, and sexual health care.

If you'd like to speak with someone for support or to ask questions, you can make an appointment with a social worker at PPNYC by calling 212-965-7000.



Health Services and Programs for Men:

PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF NEW YORK CITY

www.ppnyc.org

To make an appointment at any of our four health centers in Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Staten Island, call 212-965-7000 or 800-230-PLAN.

Services for men include: testicular exam and instruction in self-exam; free condoms; STI testing and treatment; HIV testing and counseling.

Planned Parenthood of New York City also has programs for teens and adults to gain the information and skills to make healthy decisions about sex and reproduction. To learn more about them, call 212-274-7209.

NEW YORK-PRESBYTERIAN YOUNG MEN'S CLINIC

www.nyp.org/services/young-mens-clinic.html

21 Audubon Avenue (between 166th and 167th Streets)

New York, NY 10032

No appointments needed. Call 212-342-3232 for hours.

THE DOOR

www.door.org

555 Broome Street, New York, NY 10013

Appointments: 212-453-0222

MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL, ADOLESCENT HEALTH CENTER

www.mountsinai.org/patient-care/service-areas/adolescent-health/areas-of-care/adolescent-health-center

312 East 94th Street (between 1st and 2nd Avenues)

New York, NY 10128

Appointments: 212-423-3000

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/ah/ah.shtml

Call 311 to find a public health clinic near you that offers free, confidential testing for STIs, including HIV.

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