

Having conversations about sexual health with young people

As part of our strategy to stop the rise of STIs, Queensland Health needs your help to look for, and take advantage of opportunities to talk to young people about their sexual health.

The following is a brief guide to help you start the conversation with your patients:

Look for opportunities

Some opportunities to start the conversation about sexual health will present themselves more easily than others. Consider bringing up the conversation at these times:

- A young person getting a prescription for, or asking about contraception
- A young person due for or having a Cervical Screening Test
- A young person getting vaccinations for overseas travel.

For more information about initiating a sexual health conversation and taking a sexual history see the **STI/BBV Testing Tool** in your pack.

Keep it positive

Young people have reported that they often feel embarrassed and uncomfortable discussing their sexual health with a health provider.

- Keep the conversation and messages positive by focusing on sexual health, not the risk of STIs.
- Use lay terms (e.g. “sex” instead of “intercourse”).
- Don’t assume patients have high health literacy.
- Help patients feel empowered, without making assumptions.
 - e.g. “Are you taking care of your sexual health?” instead of “Are you aware of the risks of unprotected intercourse?”
 - and “Your sexual health is important. Are you taking care of yourself?”

Following these steps will help you create a more open and welcoming environment, allowing your patient to be more comfortable and engaged.

Use the resources on hand

- Use the STI/BBV Testing Tool in your pack to assist you to take a sexual health history, access current guidelines for STI tests and treatment, and access support for partner notification/contact tracing.
- Provide young patients with ‘Information for you’ tear off flyers from your pack to direct them to STI prevention, testing and support information.
- Direct young patients to the Queensland Health **Stop the Rise of STIs** website at www.qld.gov.au/stoptherise which has youth-friendly information about safe sex, STIs, partner notification and other resources.

Visit www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/sex-health for more information and links to accredited sexual health training for health providers in Queensland.

**STOP THE
RISE OF STIS**

**Get tested. Use protection.
Every year. Every partner.**

qld.gov.au/stoptherise



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