Introduction

There were over 70,000 reported cases of STIs (sexually transmissible infections) in Australia in 2012 (Kirby Institute, 2013). Three quarters of known cases occurred among people aged between 15 and 29 years. Chlamydia rates have quadrupled in the last decade, mainly among young people. The purpose of this activity is to make sure that young people understand the prevalence, transmission routes, potential consequences, the importance of seeking testing and treatment, as well as how to get testing and treatment.

Whilst there are a lot of different things people can do with and for each other that are sexual, when we say ‘sex’ for this activity we mean vaginal, anal and oral sex. The reason we are talking about these behaviours is because they are a risk for STIs including HIV.

Activities

1. What do you know?
2. Information hunt
3. How to put on a condom (video)
4. Getting tested

Time

100 minutes

Handouts

- H1: Information hunt poster
- H2: Getting Tested: Visiting A Health Service Information Sheet

Slides

- S1: Chlamydia
Background Material

• B1: What Do You Know? STI Overview

Videos

• See reference list
ACTIVITY 1: WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Overview:** After a brief overview of STI information this session goes on to explore the social ramifications of getting Chlamydia. Whether a person gets or transmits an STI, and whether or not they seek testing and treatment, is influenced as much (if not more) by their attitudes and beliefs as their knowledge about these infections.

**Key Messages**
- STIs can be passed during oral, vaginal, or anal sex with an infected partner.
- Up to 75% of women and 50% of men may have no symptoms.
- Both young women and young men can become infected with, and transmit STIs

**Preparation and Materials**
- Read *B1: What Do You Know? STI Overview*.
- Students can search for the information online. Use Government health sites, Sexual Health Clinic or Family Planning Websites for reliable information.
- H1: Information hunt poster
- H2: Getting Tested: Visiting A Health Service Information Sheet

**Method**

**PART ONE**

1. Tell the students: One of the issues to consider when deciding about if, when, or how to be sexually active is the chance of getting a sexually transmissible infection (STI). Draw 5 columns titled:
2. In the first column ask to students to brainstorm a list of STIs. In the following columns:

- Tick the curable STIs
- Brainstorm possible symptoms of STIs
- Brainstorm possible consequences of STIs if untreated
- Identify different ways to prevent getting or transmitting an STI

3. Students could use one of the following websites to answer the questions:


**PART TWO**

1. Watch one of the following videos:

- *Chlamydia: the secret is out*, Part 1 (13 Minutes). This video was created by The Australian Research Centre In Sex, Health and Society. It is a drama in two parts featuring a young couple, Chloe and Kane.

- *[What’s involved in a sexual health check in Australia]*

- *Sex Guru, Episode One “Sex Test”*
  This clip explores what its like to get a sexual health test at Melbourne Sexual Health Centre. The ‘sex gurus’ talk about their fears and experiences! Produced by Minus18, Australia’s largest youth-led network for gay, bi, lesbian and trans teens.
2. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

• What is the test for chlamydia?
• What are the symptoms of chlamydia (or other STIs)?
• If one of your friends told you they had chlamydia what advice or help could you give them?
ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY 2: INFORMATION HUNT

1. Divide the class into four mixed-gender groups. Assign each group a topic from *H1: Information Hunt poster*

2. Explain:
   - *In your group you will create a poster about your topic. Use your imagination!*
   - *Be as thorough as possible. Include information about testing, treatment, and prevention. You may use the resource materials. In some cases (such as for the posters about “myths”) you may want to interview classmates to gather ideas.*
   - Distribute brochures, texts, online sources and supplies for students to make poster.

3. Remind students to take about ten minutes to gather their information, ten minutes to discuss it and plan a poster, and 15 minutes to produce the poster. Circulate to support groups while they research, discuss, and produce their posters.

4. Ask each group to present its poster and take questions from the class. Display posters in the classroom.

ACTIVITY 3: HOW TO PUT ON A CONDOM, LACI GREEN

1. Laci Green is an American YouTube video-blogger and public sex educator who has a lot of down-to-earth advice about sex. And in this case, condoms. Sex+ is a weekly YouTube show covering topics related to sexuality, relationships, body image, and gender.

   [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VH8ymwaS0BY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VH8ymwaS0BY)


   Ansell Sex Ed is the product of a partnership between Ansell and The Australian Research Centre In Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS) at La Trobe University, Melbourne. The website an on-line community library designed to support sex education teachers of Australia and is moderated by an experienced teacher and teacher trainer at ARCSHS.
Activity 4: Getting Tested

Time: 15 minutes

Overview: In previous sessions we have investigated some of the social issues and attitudes towards relationships and STIs that effect people’s capacity to manage their sexual health. In this session we would like to focus on issues to do with accessing health services. Some significant barriers to managing sexual health are beliefs about what testing and treatment might be like, and concerns about the reception and possible censure a person will receive on visiting a health service. This session could be preparatory to a visit from a local health provider.

Key Messages

• Females and males who are having sex should get tested for STIs at least once a year or when they get a new sexual partner. Testing usually involves a simple urine test.

• Choosing and using good health care is a young person’s right and an important skill for a young person to have.

• Choosing not to have vaginal, anal or oral sex will prevent the transmission of most STIs including HIV.

• Condoms will prevent the spread of most STIs, including HIV.

Preparation and Materials


• Copies of H2: Getting Tested: Visiting A Health Service Information Sheet, 1 per student

• A3 Paper and pens/textas
Method

1. Divide the class into even number of small groups. Give each group some A3 paper and textas. Ask the students to come up with a list of reasons/barriers for why a young person would not go to a health service to get tested for Chlamydia. Some examples might be:
   - Issues about confidentiality
   - Lack of choice of health provider
   - Only one doctor
   - Long waiting list
   - No bulk billing/cost
   - Getting there
   - Medicare cards
   - Making an appointment
   - Choosing the right provider you are comfortable with.

2. Ask each group to read out their lists

3. Get each group to swap their sheets with the group to their right > Ask each group to come up with a simple solution (eg. frightened of going on your own – take a friend) to each of the barriers on the sheet > Share with large group and discuss.

4. What are the services in your locality? Have you heard if they are youth-friendly? Professional?

5. Find out if your state offers home test kits for chlamydia.
### STI Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF STI</th>
<th>Curable?</th>
<th>General symptoms for STIs</th>
<th>Possible consequences for all STIs</th>
<th>Prevention for all STIs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chlamydia</td>
<td>Curable</td>
<td>Unusual discharge from the penis, vagina or anus</td>
<td>Pain and discomfort</td>
<td>Not having sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Burning pain, irritation or stinging when urinating</td>
<td>Feelings of shame or embarrassment</td>
<td>Using condoms during intercourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Any sores, rashes, blister/s, lumps or rashes near the genitals</td>
<td>Infertility</td>
<td>Using condoms and dams during oral sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Itching in the genital area</td>
<td>Long term chronic illness</td>
<td>Choosing other ways to have a sexual relationship that don’t involve intercourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pubic Lice (Crabs)</td>
<td>Curable</td>
<td></td>
<td>Some untreated STIs may lead to life threatening illnesses</td>
<td>People who are having sex should get tested for STIs at least once a year or when they get a new sexual partner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Treatable but not curable</td>
<td>Pain during intercourse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genital Herpes</td>
<td>Treatable but not curable</td>
<td>Deep abdominal pain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Remember, 75% of women with Chlamydia, and 50% of men may have no symptoms*
H1: INFORMATION HUNT POSTER TOPICS

- Myths about STIs
- Myths about HIV and AIDS
- Dual protection (or the Double Dutch method – using contraception and condoms)
- Five important facts about HIV and AIDS
- What is chlamydia?
- STIs and gender
- How do chlamydia and gonorrhea affect future fertility?
- HPV and herpes: two important STIs
- What is a reproductive tract infection?

Those students investigating specific STIs could cover the following information:

- What is it?
- How is it transmitted?
- Signs and symptoms
- How do they test for it?
- When should someone get a test?
- How is it treated?
- Where should they go for help?
- How is it prevented?
CHLAMYDIA, AND OTHER STIs CAN BE PASSED DURING ORAL, VAGINAL, OR ANAL SEX WITH AN INFECTED PARTNER.
No symptoms. Up to 75% of men and 50% of women may have no symptoms.

S1: Chlamydia Slides
If a person does get some signs or symptoms, they usually happen within 1-3 weeks of having sex with the infected person. Men may get a discharge from the penis, and women may get a vaginal discharge that is different to their normal, healthy discharge.
Both young women and young men can become infected with, and transmit, Chlamydia.
People who are having sex should get tested for STIs at least once a year or when they get a new sexual partner. Testing usually involves a simple urine test.
TREATMENT IS SIMPLE. IT IS USUALLY JUST A SINGLE-DOSE ANTIBIOTIC.
CHOOSING AND USING GOOD HEALTH CARE IS A YOUNG PERSON'S RIGHT AND AN IMPORTANT SKILL FOR A YOUNG PERSON TO HAVE.
CHOOSING NOT TO HAVE VAGINAL, ANAL OR ORAL SEX WILL PREVENT THE TRANSMISSION OF CHLAMYDIA.
CONDOMS WILL PREVENT THE SPREAD OF CHLAMYDIA (BUT NOT ALL OTHER STIS).
It’s not unusual to feel nervous about going to a clinic to get an STI check up. Knowing what to expect can help to make you feel more comfortable.

Choosing a health provider?
(If you live somewhere where you have a choice) It is your right to get good health care. It’s important to feel comfortable and safe talking with your health professional.

A good health professional will
• listen to you
• not judge your behaviour
• ask you questions about your health including your sexual history
• explain things in a way that you can understand
• talk to you about how to look after your health
• answer your questions
• where appropriate, keep your visit confidential

Some things to ask when you ring up a health service
• Do I need to make an appointment?
• How much will it cost?
• Will the service bulk bill or offer reduced fees to young people?
• Do I need my Medicare number to attend the service?
• Do I need to have my parent’s/carer’s permission?
• Can I choose whether I see a male/female doctor?
• Can I bring a friend?

What to ask about an STI check up
• When will I get the results?
• Do I have to come back to get the results?
What are my local health services?

Confidentiality

Health professionals can provide young people with confidential information and help with contraception, pregnancy testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections.

Sometimes young people do not seek medical help because they are worried that other people, including their family and friends, will be told what they went there for. Most of the time, a health professional must keep confidential all information shared during the young person’s visit. But there are exceptions. They include:

- If a child under 16 has been harmed in the past and that harm is currently affecting the health of the child;
- if serious criminal activity is involved (this does not include illegal drug use); or
- if the young person is not mature enough to be able to make decisions about treatment without reference to parents or guardians.

Generally speaking, if the health professional believes that there is no abuse of the young person, or any criminal activity, the meeting will stay confidential.

Bulk billing

When you go to a GP they can either charge you money for the consultation (direct bill) or they can ‘bulk bill’ you. Direct billing means that you have to pay upfront and then you can take the receipt with you to a Medicare office and get some of that money back. Bulk billing means that you give the doctor (or their receptionist) your Medicare card (or just your number if you have it written down somewhere) and they get you to sign a Medicare form. That means that the doctor can get payment for seeing you directly from the government instead of from you.

You can ask the GP (or their receptionist) when you make an appointment whether they bulk bill. Many GPs will bulk bill young people, as well as health care card owners and pensioners.

If you don’t have a Medicare card or don’t wish to obtain one you can visit a sexual health clinic or pay to see a doctor. Doctors only require a Medicare card for people who want to claim the cost of the consultation. The services sexual health clinics offer are free and do not require a Medicare card.
**How do I get a Medicare card?**

The first step is to get a Medicare card application form. You can get one from a Medicare office or by calling Medicare on 132 011 or by downloading a form from the Medicare site.

When you enrol you will need to show proof that you are eligible (e.g. a birth certificate or passport). Young people over the age of 15 are eligible to be enrolled on their own Medicare card. Once you have been approved, your Medicare card will then be sent to you in the mail or you can arrange to pick it up from a Medicare office.

**Health Care Card**

If you are receiving or about to receive benefits from Centrelink, you will get a Health Care card. If you are under 16 years and your parents have a Health Care card, then you can use their card. A Health Care card has many benefits such as cheaper health care, cheaper medicines and travel concessions, but each state or territory is different, Visit [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au) and search under ‘Health Care card’.
References for this section