

# Contact Tracing

## What is it?

You've just found out you have a sexually transmitted infection (STI). There's a lot going through your mind – and, getting treated as soon as possible is vital.

Besides getting healthy, you need to make sure everyone you've had sex with recently knows to get tested, too. Doctors call this process contact tracing.

Contact tracing is important for several reasons:

- To make sure your previous partners get tested and treated
- To stop your previous partners accidentally spreading the infection to other people
- To make sure you don't get re-infected – if you're still with the same partner

Contact tracing is extremely important if you have HIV, a life-threatening condition. Starting early treatment gives you the best chance of living well with HIV. It also helps to limit any further spread.

## What will my GP do now?

Your GP will work with you to find the best way to complete your contact tracing. You can choose the option that makes you feel most comfortable.

You can also talk to your GP about how your partners may react and plan some strategies for dealing with this.

## What will my GP do in the future?

If you choose to notify yourself, your GP will:

- Guide you on what you need to say – to make sure you're giving your partners the right information
- Help you work out how to tell your partners – either online or in person (see the supports section for resources to help)
- Give you a letter for your partners – to help them determine their next steps
- Refer you to a specialist sexual health clinic – for dedicated support to help you manage this

If you ask your GP to notify your partners:

- You'll decide who will do the telling – your GP, health provider delegate or another health agency
- You will need to give consent for your GP to contact them
- You can remain anonymous if you wish

Your GP will also help you find ways to reduce the chance of this happening again, these strategies can include condom use and regular STI testing.

In some cases, your GP may refer you to a specialist sexual health clinic, for example, if you have HIV, syphilis or gonorrhoea or if you are having trouble getting in touch with your previous partners or if you're getting repeat infections.

## Ways to notify your partner



Notify your partners yourself



Ask your GP to notify your partners - either anonymously or on your behalf



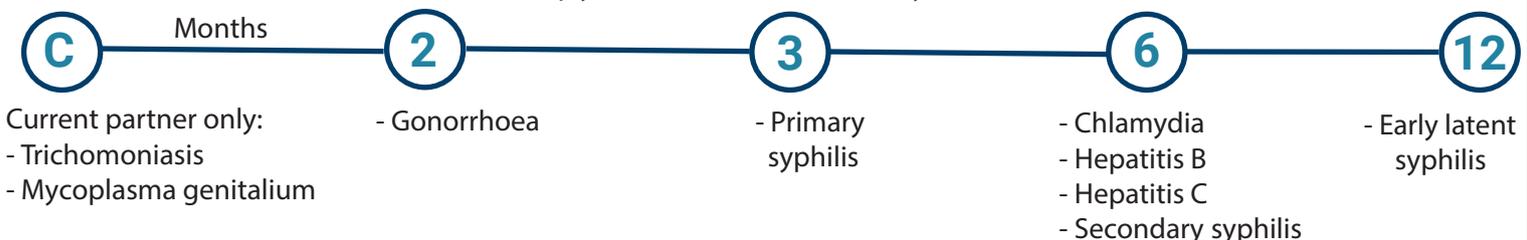
Use a contact tracing service to send an SMS, email or help you write a letter



Get assistance from the Liverpool Sexual Health Clinic

## How far back to trace?

You don't need to tell every partner you've ever had about your STI. Here is a guide to help you work out how far back you need to trace:



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## What can I do?

Many people with an STI don't know they have it because they have no symptoms. Despite this, they could still develop complications – or, pass the disease on to a new partner.

Here's how you can ensure the contact tracing process flows smoothly:

- Make a list of all potential partners who may need to know
- Think about cues, such as certain locations or events
- Even if you've only had one sexual partner, you still need to let them know
- Request a referral to a sexual health clinic if you prefer to speak to a sexual health professional

## What questions could I ask my doctor?

*Why do I need to tell people?*

*Who should I tell?*

*What do I need to tell them?*

*What if I'm too embarrassed to tell others?*

*Will my family and friends find out?*

*What if I have no way of contacting my previous partners?*



## What supports are available?

The **Liverpool Sexual Health Clinic** offers private STI testing and diagnosis. The clinic can also help you with contact tracing and staff can help you manage and cope with your STI diagnosis. You can either ask your GP to refer you or contact the clinic directly.

Address: Ground Floor, 13 Elizabeth Street, Liverpool, ph 9827 8022

### Contact tracing websites

The following websites can send an anonymous SMS or email to let your partners know they need to get tested:

- **Let Them Know:** [letthemknow.org.au](http://letthemknow.org.au)
- **The Drama Downunder** – for men who have sex with men: [thedramadownunder.info](http://thedramadownunder.info)
- **Better to Know** – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific: [bettertoknow.org.au](http://bettertoknow.org.au)

## Where can I learn more?

If you'd like to read more about contact tracing and sexual health, the following resource list can help:

- **Liverpool Sexual Health Clinic:** [swslhd.nsw.gov.au](http://swslhd.nsw.gov.au)
- **NSW Sexual Health Info Link** – phone 1800 451 624 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm): [shil.nsw.gov.au](http://shil.nsw.gov.au)
- **NSW Health** – Sexual Health Plus: [health.nsw.gov.au](http://health.nsw.gov.au)
- **Let Them Know** – for heterosexuals: [letthemknow.org.au](http://letthemknow.org.au)
- **Better To Know** – notify your partners anonymously: [bettertoknow.org.au](http://bettertoknow.org.au)
- **Drama Down Under** - for men who have sex with men (MSM): [thedramadownunder.info](http://thedramadownunder.info)

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs

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