

#sexualhealth
#publichealth5-19service



SEXUAL HEALTH FACTSHEET

This factsheet will provide you with sexual health information and links to helpful websites.

Sexual health

Growing up and entering a world of relationships and sex can be worrying and confusing at times.

People are quite often reluctant to talk about sex, sexual health and contraception. Maybe you are embarrassed to talk about something so personal, don't want to admit you don't know something about sex, or maybe you just don't know where to go for information.

The 'secrecy' around sex means there are lots of rumours flying around, many of them not true. By finding out the real facts about sexual health, you can reduce the risks and stay safe.

"My friend had to go to the clinic, and she was really embarrassed. So I went with her and got checked out too so she wouldn't feel so bad. It wasn't anything to be worried about."

Contraception

There are many different methods of contraception available and these are available from community contraceptive sexual health clinics, GUM clinics, your own doctor and some pharmacies, NHS walk in centres and accident and emergency departments. Contraception is free, including emergency contraception.

Condoms are made from thin rubber or plastic and put over the end of an erect penis to stop sperm from entering the vagina. Female condoms line the vagina and the area just outside to stop the sperm from entering. Condoms are the only contraception that can protect against STIs as well as pregnancy.

"If you carry a condom, it makes it look like you expect sex. But then, if you don't have one, you're more likely to just take the risk and have sex anyway."

Contraceptive pills are taken daily for either 21 days of the month, or every day, depending on the type. The pill works by stopping you from producing an egg (ovulation). It thickens the mucus in your vagina to prevent sperm reaching your egg, and thins the lining of your womb to stop the egg implanting. This method is about 99% effective when taken properly.

The contraceptive injection is given in your bottom every 12 weeks but it is sometimes given in the arm. It works in the same way as the pill, by stopping you from producing an egg. This method is over 99% effective if used as instructed.

The contraceptive implant is a small, flexible tube put under the skin in your arm using a specially designed device. It releases a hormone called progestogen and stops you from producing an egg. This method is over 99% effective, works for 3 years and most women can have an implant fitted.

Coils are small plastic or copper devices that are put into your womb. They can stop the sperm reaching your egg, thin the lining of your womb to stop the egg implanting and stop you producing an egg. These devices are around 99% effective.

The **contraceptive patch** is a small patch which is stuck to your skin. It releases 2 hormones and works in the same way as the pill by stopping you from producing an egg. This method is over 99% effective.

The **contraceptive patch** (EVRA) is a small, thin beige coloured patch which is stuck to your skin in a discreet place. It releases 2 hormones and works in the same way as the pill by stopping you from releasing an egg. This method is over 99% effective when used as instructed.

The **contraceptive vaginal ring** (NUVARING) is flexible, clear plastic ring. It is placed in the vagina where it releases hormones to stop you releasing an egg. It is 99% effective if used as instructed.

All long acting reversible contraception (LARC) methods are very effective because you do not have to remember to use or take contraception.

Pregnancy

Pregnancy can occur when a man and woman have sex without using contraception or when their contraception fails (the condom splits, or if you miss a pill). You may develop signs of pregnancy as soon as one week after conception (when the sperm fertilizes the egg). Signs can include:

- a late period
- a lighter or shorter period than normal
- swelling or tender breasts
- passing urine more often than usual
- feeling or being sick - often referred to as morning sickness
- mood changes
- feeling more tired than usual
- a change in appetite.

If you are experiencing any of these signs and especially if you haven't got your period, your first step would be to have a pregnancy test. You can have a free pregnancy test at family planning clinics, some GUM clinics or GP surgeries, or you can buy one from most chemists or supermarkets.

When you get the result of your pregnancy test you know whether you are pregnant (positive) or not pregnant (negative). If the result is negative and you don't want to become pregnant then it would be a good idea to look at your choices of contraception. If you get a positive result then you need to decide what to do, but there are people who can help you with that decision – you are not alone. You could continue the pregnancy and keep the baby, continue the pregnancy and place the baby for adoption or fostering or end the pregnancy by having a termination.

If you are concerned that you may be pregnant or would like to talk to somebody, please contact one of the sexual health services.

“I always use a condom, I wouldn’t want to get a girl pregnant and I’d feel embarrassed if I gave her a disease.”

What are sexually transmitted infections (STIs)?

There are at least 25 different STIs. What they all have in common is that they can be passed on through sexual contact, including vaginal, oral and anal sex.

Who usually gets STIs?

You don’t have to sleep around to catch an STI - anyone who is sexually active can get one.

What does sexually active mean?

‘Sexually active’ means anyone who has ever had sex, even just once.

‘Sexual partner’ means anyone that you have had sexual contact with.

‘Sexual contact’ includes vaginal, oral and anal sex.

Why is it important to find out if I have an STI?

If you have an STI, it’s important to find out so that you can get it treated as soon as possible, and so that you don’t pass it on to someone else. If left untreated, some STIs can cause serious and permanent damage. In some cases it can damage your fertility, meaning that it can be harder for you to get pregnant in the future, or making you unable to have children at all. If you are pregnant, some STIs can be passed to your unborn baby.

How do I know if I have been infected?

Some symptoms may include:

- unusual discharge
- rash/irritation
- pain or burning when passing urine
- passing urine more often
- pain during sex.

However, you may not know that you have an STI, as some of them have no symptoms. The only way to find out for sure is to get tested.

How do I prevent an STI?

Using a condom is the most effective method to reduce the risk of catching an STI, although it is not 100% effective. Many other methods of contraception will stop you from getting pregnant, but will not protect you against STIs.

Common STIs

Chlamydia is a common bacterial infection affecting both men and women. Many people do not experience any symptoms, and if left untreated it can cause serious complications. It is very easy to diagnose and treat, and if you have Chlamydia it is always advised that anyone you have had sex with gets tested too so they can be treated if they have it. The bacteria can affect the cervix (inside your vagina), urethra (where you wee from), bottom, throat and eyes.

Gonorrhoea is a bacterial infection that can affect the penis, vagina, bottom and throat and if left untreated it can cause serious complications. Treating the infection is very easy and it is always advised that sexual partners are tested too.

Genital warts are very common and are caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). The majority of sexually active people will be exposed to the HPV virus, although only a small number

will develop warts. There are a lot of different types of warts that can be found on the vagina, cervix, penis, bottom and pretty much anywhere else on the body. Warts are spread through skin to skin contact with an infected person. It is possible to treat warts but the treatment will be different depending on what the warts look like and where on the body they appear.

Non Specific Urethritis (NSU) is a common condition that can be sexually transmitted. It results in an inflammation of the urethra (where you wee from). NSU does not cause symptoms in women, but if you have sex with a man with NSU, then you will need to be tested. It is easily treated.

Trichomonas Vaginalis (TV) is highly infectious and is found in the vagina and urethra. It is caused by a tiny parasite and is usually sexually transmitted. It is easily treated.

Bacterial Vaginosis (BV) is a common condition that can be sexually transmitted. It is a relatively harmless condition that usually only affects sexually active woman and is easily treated. Sexual partners do not need to be treated.

Herpes Simplex (HSV) can affect the genitals, the skin surrounding your bottom and fingers, and your mouth. The virus can cause mouth ulcers which are more commonly called 'cold sores'. The virus is spread through skin to skin contact and all forms of sexual contact from kissing to vaginal, oral or anal sex. The risk of the virus spreading is much higher when sores or blisters are visible, though it can also be spread when an infected person has no symptoms. The sores and blisters can be treated, but the virus cannot be cured completely.

Thrush is a very common condition that can be sexually transmitted, but it can also be caused by other things. It is caused by a fungus that exists on the skin, in the mouth, gut and vagina. It can be easily treated and sexual partners so not always need to be treated.

Pubic lice (Crabs) are tiny parasite insects that live in body hair. They can be found in pubic hair, armpits, hairy chests, eyebrows/lashes and beards, and they travel from person to person by crawling from hair to hair - they do not jump or fly. They can be easily treated.

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is the virus that can lead to AIDS. The virus attacks cells in the immune system and people with HIV may become very ill. People infected with HIV will not know straight away and may not become ill for a while. It can be transmitted by sexual contact, sharing needles, syringes or other drug taking equipment, from mother to baby, donated blood, tattoo and piercing equipment and injury with a used needle. HIV cannot be cured, but treatment can help manage the effects.

Hepatitis is an infectious virus that can cause liver problems. There are different types of Hepatitis that can be spread in different ways. Some hepatitis infections will need treated but others will not.

Syphilis is a serious bacterial infection, that can be passed on through sex as well as from mother to baby. If left untreated it may cause serious complications. It is easily treated.

"It feels horrible when you've been drinking and you wake up somewhere next to someone you shouldn't be with."

Sexual health services in Cumbria

“It’s a good idea to go to the clinic and get checked out. If you do have something, most of the time you can get it sorted really easily so you don’t pass it on or it doesn’t stop you having kids in the future.”

How do I get tested?

Contact one of the sexual health services listed on this factsheet

Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Cumbria SEXUAL HEALTH

Kendal & Penrith Opening Times

01539 716706

All clinics are **appointment based**: Please call to make an appointment - there are NO walk-in clinics.

ON THE DAY APPOINTMENTS: Call during the **first 45 minutes** of the clinic opening times, detailed below.

	Kentwood Clinic, Kendal	Penrith Hospital	Call for on the day appointments during these times:
MONDAY	11.30am - 7.30pm	-	11.30am - 12.15pm
TUESDAY	-	1pm - 7.30pm (call 01229 404464)	-
WEDNESDAY	9am - 5pm	-	9am - 9.45am
THURSDAY	-	-	-
FRIDAY	-	-	-

(updated: December 2017)



Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Cumbria SEXUAL HEALTH

Solway Clinic, Carlisle Opening Times

01228 608989

All clinics are **appointment based**: Please call to make an appointment - there are NO walk-in clinics.

ON THE DAY APPOINTMENTS: Call during the **first 45 minutes** of the clinic opening times, detailed below.

	Opening Times	Call for on the day appointments during these times:
MONDAY	9am - 5pm	9am - 9.45am
TUESDAY	11.30am - 7.30pm	11.30am - 12.15pm
WEDNESDAY	9am - 5pm	9am - 9.45am
THURSDAY	11.30am - 7.30pm	11.30am - 12.15pm
FRIDAY	9am - 2pm	9am - 9.45am

PLEASE NOTE: Solway Clinic is closed during the first Monday morning of every month.

(updated: December 2017)



Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Cumbria SEXUAL HEALTH

West Cumbria Opening Times

01900 705050

All clinics are **appointment based**: Please call to make an appointment - there are NO walk-in clinics.

ON THE DAY APPOINTMENTS: Call during the **first 45 minutes** of the clinic opening times, detailed below.

	Derwent Clinic, Workington	Flatt Walks, Whitehaven	Call for on the day appointments during these times:
MONDAY	9am - 5pm	Closed	9am - 9.45am
TUESDAY	11.30am - 7.30pm	Closed	11.30am - 12.15pm
WEDNESDAY	11.30am - 7.30pm	11.30am - 7.30pm	11.30am - 12.15pm
THURSDAY	Closed	11.30am - 7.30pm	-
FRIDAY	9am - 5pm	Closed	9am - 9.45am

PLEASE NOTE: Derwent Clinic is closed during the first Monday morning of every month.

(updated: December 2017)



Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Cumbria SEXUAL HEALTH

Birchwood Clinic, Barrow Opening Times

01229 404464

All clinics are **appointment based**: Please call to make an appointment - there are NO walk-in clinics.

ON THE DAY APPOINTMENTS: Call during the **first 45 minutes** of the clinic opening times, detailed below.

	Opening Times	Call for on the day appointments during these times:
MONDAY	Closed	-
TUESDAY	11.30am - 7.30pm	11.30am - 12.15pm
WEDNESDAY	Closed	-
THURSDAY	11.30am - 7.30pm	11.30am - 12.15pm
FRIDAY	9am - 5pm	9am - 9.45am

PLEASE NOTE: Birchwood Clinic is closed during the **third Tuesday morning** of every month.

(updated: December 2017)



Call Sexual Healthline Cumbria on 0845 371 4037* to be directed to the right service for your needs, whether you need advice on contraception or testing for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or sexual health treatments. Calls are confidential, discreet and they will be able to direct you to the nearest service for your needs or even help you book an appointment. *Calls charged at local rate.



Some community pharmacies will provide pregnancy testing and the emergency contraceptive pill. Remember to look for the sign.

Or text - pharmacy EHC and your home post code to **80011** and you will receive a return text with details of the three nearest pharmacies offering emergency hormonal contraception.

GP surgeries (family doctors) will also provide advice and guidance around contraception, pregnancy and sexual health.

VISIT THESE USEFUL WEBSITES:

www.cumbriapartnership.nhs.uk/our-services/specialist-services/cumbria-sexual-health

Cumbria Partnership NHS webpage for sexual health services

www.thebridgeway.org.uk/

Provide services in Cumbria for people who live or have been raped or sexually assaulted within Cumbria

www.birchalltrust.org.uk

Provide counselling for survivors of rape or sexual abuse in South Cumbria

www.kooth.com

Free online counselling and support

www.brook.org.uk

Website for sexual health & wellbeing advice and information for under 25s

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/contraception/>

NHS Choices webpage provide information about contraception

www.healthforteens.co.uk

Website covering subjects that promote a healthy body and mind including sexual health for young people aged 11-19

www.sexwise.fpa.org.uk

Website from FPA that provides advice about sexual health

www.riseabove.org.uk

Information and resources for young people about health related topics