



# STI Prevention Multilingual Toolkit

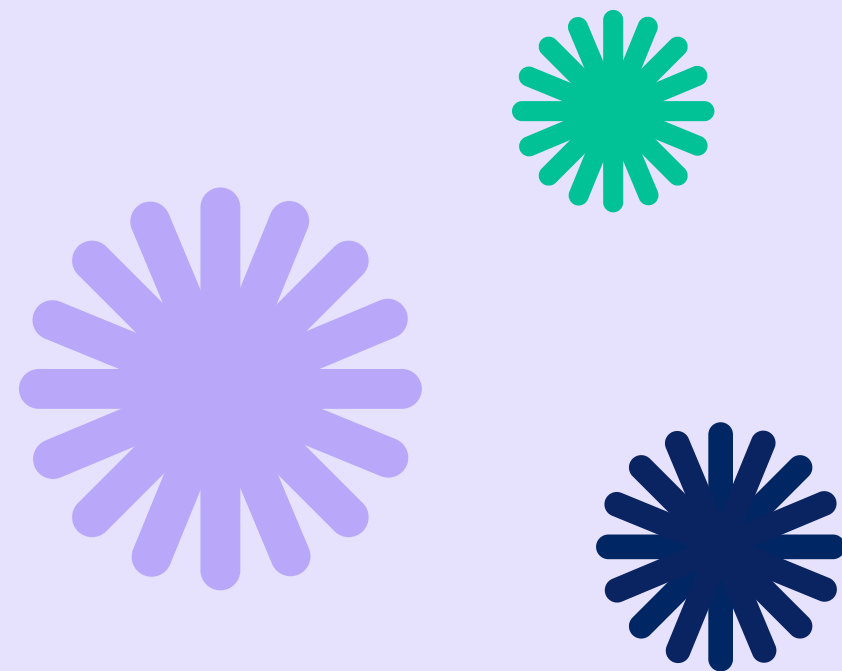


**Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service (MHAHS)**  
**Diversity Programs and Strategy Hub**

 [www.mhahs.org.au](http://www.mhahs.org.au)  @TheMHAHS

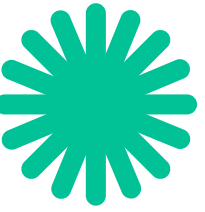
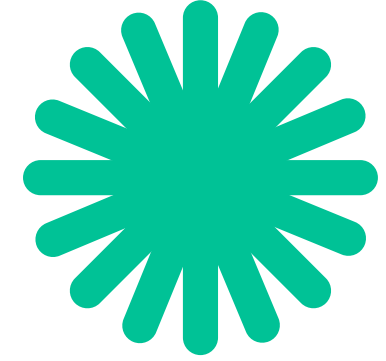


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# Introduction to STIs



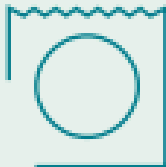
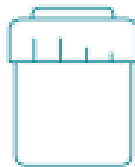


Sexually transmissible infections (STIs) are infections that can be passed from person to person during unprotected sex. STIs are largely preventable and, in most cases, can be effectively treated or managed.

However, if left untreated, STIs pose significant health risks including reproductive health issues, adverse pregnancy outcomes, neonatal infections, cancer, and increased risk of other infections, including HIV.

Increasing awareness, preventing, routinely testing for, and treating STIs underpin the public health approach to sexual health and wellbeing.

The [NSW Sexually Transmissible Infections \(STI\) Strategy 2022-2026](#) outlines the priorities for STI prevention, testing, treatment and management, as well as how NSW may improve equity and access to services.

# NSW STI Strategy 2022-2026

|  |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| <b>Aim</b><br>Reduce the prevalence and impacts of sexually transmissible infections in NSW.   |  |  | <b>Vision</b><br>A NSW where people are informed about the risks of sexually transmissible infections (STIs) and can easily access prevention methods and testing. Those affected by STIs receive timely treatment and their partners are promptly notified. Innovations are pursued, and stigma, discrimination, and other barriers to knowledge, prevention, testing, and treatment are removed. |   |
| <b>Goals</b>   | <b>1. Prevent</b><br>new infections through new and existing methods, education and health promotion<br> | <b>2. Test</b><br>often, normalise testing, and promote innovative testing models<br>  | <b>3. Treat</b><br>STIs rapidly and effectively, and reduce onward transmission<br>  | <b>4. Equity and Access</b><br>to services, reduce STI-related stigma, and remove barriers to seeking healthcare<br>  |
|  | <b>Targets</b>   | <b>Targets</b>   | <b>Targets</b>   | <b>Targets</b>  |
|  | <b>Initiatives</b>   | <b>Initiatives</b>   | <b>Initiatives</b>   | <b>Initiatives</b>  |
| <b>1. Prevent</b><br>1.i 75% of sexually active young people use condoms with casual partners<br>1.ii 5% reduction in notification rates of infectious syphilis and gonorrhoea by 2026<br><br>1.1 Condoms<br>1.2 School education<br>1.3 Health promotion<br>1.4 Peer education and outreach<br>1.5 Vaccines and other biomedical prevention |  | <b>2. Test</b><br>2.i 100% of pregnancies are screened for syphilis at least once<br>2.ii 5% increase each year in comprehensive STI testing in the priority populations MSM, sex workers, trans and gender diverse people, and Aboriginal people<br><br>2.1 Innovative models<br>2.2 Workforce development<br>2.3 Digital integration<br>2.4 Antenatal care<br>2.5 Research |  | <b>3. Treat</b><br>3.i Eliminate congenital syphilis<br>3.ii 95% of people diagnosed with infectious syphilis are treated within two weeks of being tested<br><br>3.1 Partner notification<br>3.2 Manage antimicrobial resistance<br>3.3 Models of care<br>3.4 Surveillance   |
|  |  |  |  | <b>4. Equity and Access</b><br>4.i At least 90% of STI notifications have Aboriginal status specified<br>4.ii 75% reduction in reported experience of stigma related to STI service provision in NSW healthcare settings<br><br>4.1 Accessible services<br>4.2 Communications<br>4.3 Aboriginal services<br>4.4 Person-centred care |

# Priority populations



**People diagnosed with an STI  
within the last 12 months**



**Sexually active young  
people under 30 years**



**Aboriginal people**



**Pregnant women**



**People from culturally and  
linguistically diverse  
backgrounds**



**Sex workers**



**Trans and gender diverse  
people**



**Men who has sex with men (MSM)**

# Syphilis and congenital syphilis

Syphilis cases are on the rise in NSW, especially amongst women aged 15 to 44 years old. This has led to an increase in congenital syphilis, mother-to child transmission during pregnancy or at birth.

If left untreated, syphilis in pregnancy can lead to serious health issues for both mother and baby, including premature birth, low birth weight, stillbirth, early infant death, or long-term health complications. Congenital syphilis is preventable through early testing and treatment during pregnancy.

In 2023, NSW antenatal guidelines were updated to support early detection and syphilis prevention. All pregnant women must now be offered syphilis screening at least twice during their pregnancy - at their first antenatal visit and again at 26–28 weeks. Additional screening should be offered when a woman has an increased risk of syphilis infection.

Raising awareness and encouraging regular antenatal care and syphilis testing can help protect families and communities.



# You, your baby and syphilis factsheet

The NSW Health ‘You, your baby and syphilis’ factsheet supports women diagnosed with, or at increased risk of syphilis during pregnancy.

The factsheet is available in English, Chinese, Indonesian, Mongolian, Nepali, Portuguese, Spanish, Thai and Vietnamese.

View

NSW Health

Factsheet

You, your baby and syphilis



### What is syphilis?

Syphilis is an infection you can get by having vaginal, anal or oral sex with someone who has syphilis. If you have syphilis when pregnant, you can also pass the infection to your unborn baby (congenital syphilis). If not treated, syphilis can cause serious health problems for you and your baby

### I'm pregnant. Do I need to get tested for syphilis?

Yes. All pregnant women are routinely offered testing for syphilis during pregnancy. Syphilis can be diagnosed with a blood test. You should get tested at least twice during pregnancy. If you are at higher risk, you should be offered additional testing in late pregnancy and at birth.



First pregnancy care appointment



26–28 week pregnancy care appointment



If at increased risk: 34-36 week visit and at birth

### Can syphilis harm my baby?

Yes. Without treatment, having syphilis while pregnant can cause:

- loss of your baby early in pregnancy (miscarriage)
- your baby to be born early (premature birth)
- death of your baby in the womb (stillbirth) or death soon after.

Babies with congenital syphilis can show symptoms at different times. Some early signs in your baby at birth or shortly after birth include:

- low birth weight
- runny nose ("snuffles")
- rashes
- swollen lymph nodes
- painful joints or bones

If not treated, some symptoms might not show up until later in childhood, like:

- bone and teeth problems
- vision or hearing issues
- learning or intellectual difficulties.

### What increases my risk of harm from syphilis?

You may be at higher risk of harm from syphilis if you:

- miss your pregnancy care appointments
- have had syphilis before
- had another sexually transmissible infection in the past year
- use drugs, especially methamphetamine ("ice") or inject drugs
- have more than one sexual partner
- have a male partner who also has sex with men.

Talk to your GP, midwife or obstetrician (pregnancy doctor) if you are unsure about when to get tested.

### How can I protect my baby during pregnancy?

You can help protect your unborn baby by:

- going to all your planned pregnancy care appointments and having all your tests. Your doctor needs your test results to make sure you and your baby receive the right care
- using condoms or avoiding unprotected sex with new partners
- avoiding sex with anyone who has sores or ulcers on their genitals
- not having sex with someone being treated for syphilis until their treatment is finished and symptoms are gone
- talking to your doctor, midwife, Aboriginal health worker or obstetrician you have any worries or don't understand your tests or treatment.

Syphilis can be safely and effectively treated during pregnancy. The earlier the infection is treated, the lower the risk that your baby will be affected by syphilis.

### How is syphilis in pregnancy treated?

Syphilis in pregnancy is treated with antibiotics (usually penicillin) given by injection. The number of injections will vary depending on the stage of infection. Some women may need weekly injections for up to three weeks. Treatment with penicillin is safe for your baby. If you are allergic to penicillin, speak to your doctor about treatment options.

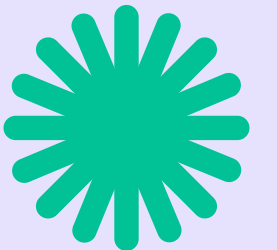
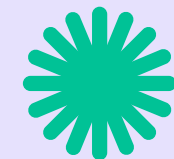
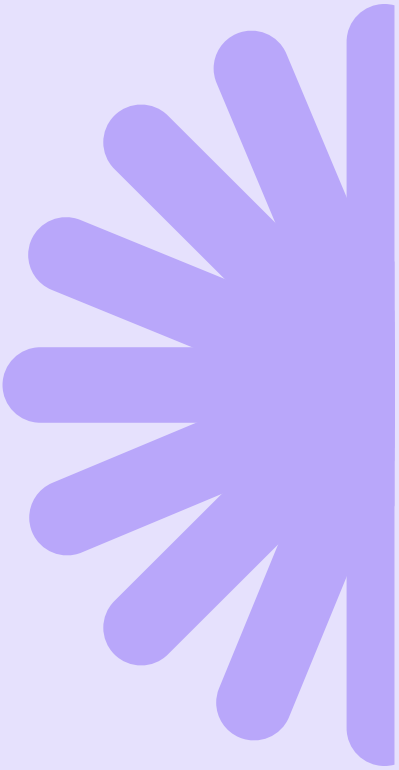
After treatment, you will need regular blood tests to check that the treatment has worked. Don't have sex until the treatment course is finished and your symptoms have gone away.

# Syphilis in Pregnancy Resources

South Western Sydney Local Health District and NSW Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service have developed a tailored 'Syphilis in Pregnancy' campaign in response to rising cases of congenital syphilis.

The campaign aims to raise awareness of the importance of syphilis testing, particularly for women of reproductive age and from diverse communities. Priority populations have been identified using health and demographic data.

A suite of resources have been developed including multilingual factsheets in 12 languages, social media tiles, signature block and digital banners which can be used and shared across a range of digital platforms.





# Factsheet: Syphilis in pregnancy

Target audience:  
All pregnant people

**Did you know?**  
**Syphilis is a serious infection that can harm you and your baby.**

If you are pregnant or planning to have a baby, early testing is extra important to make sure you don't pass syphilis on to your baby.



**Syphilis** is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) that is passed on from one person to another during sex. More women aged 15 to 44 years old are getting it. Find out how you can protect yourself and your loved ones.



**You might not have any symptoms**  
Some people might not feel sick or know they have syphilis.  
Look out for sores or ulcers, rashes, muscle and joint aches, headaches and fatigue.



**Stay safe**  
Practice safe sex – use condoms with a new sexual partner and get tested regularly. Sexual partners should also be tested regularly to stop syphilis passing back to you or to others.  
If you do not feel comfortable contacting sexual partners yourself, you can visit [www.letthemknow.org.au](http://www.letthemknow.org.au) for advice or talk to your doctor.



**Get a test regularly**  
Syphilis tests are important routine tests during pregnancy. Visit your doctor, midwife or maternity service provider to get tested.  
There is no shame in getting tested – it's private, quick and easy.



**Treatment**  
Treatment is easy – medication gets rid of the infection and is safe for you and your baby.  
Without treatment, syphilis can affect your health and the health of your baby. This includes the possible death of your baby.



Scan the QR code to find out more about syphilis and women's health.



South Western Sydney  
Local Health District  
Health Promotion Service



English

Arabic

Bengali

Chinese

Hindi

Fijian

Khmer



Mongolian

Nepali

Samoan

Tagalog

Tongan

Vietnamese


Order free hard copy factsheets

# Factsheet: Syphilis can affect everybody


Target audience:  
General population

Did you know?


## Syphilis can affect everybody.




Syphilis is a serious sexually transmitted infection (STI) that is passed on from one person to another during sex.




**You might not have any symptoms**  
Some people might not feel sick or know they have syphilis.  
Look out for sores or ulcers, rashes, muscle and joint aches, headaches and fatigue.




**Stay safe**  
Practice safe sex – always use a condom with water or silicone based lubricants.  
If you do not feel comfortable contacting sexual partners yourself, you can visit [www.letthemknow.org.au](http://www.letthemknow.org.au) for advice or talk to your doctor.




**Get a test regularly**  
Ask your doctor or visit a medical centre for a full STI test that includes syphilis.  
If you have had sex or oral sex without a condom get a STI test. There is no shame in getting tested.




**Treatment**  
Treatment is easy – medication gets rid of the infection.  
Tell your sexual partner so they can also get tested and treated. This will stop syphilis passing back to you or to others.



**To talk to a trained nurse**  
Call the Sexual Health Info Line (SHIL) on 1800 451 624 Monday-Friday 9:00am to 5:30pm.  
Call 131 450 to speak in your language. Available 7 days, 24 hours.  
Visit the website [www.shil.nsw.gov.au](http://www.shil.nsw.gov.au)




Scan the QR code to find out more about syphilis.



MULTICULTURAL HIV  
HEPATITIS SERVICE

South Western Sydney  
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- English
- Arabic
- Bengali
- Chinese
- Hindi
- Fijian
- Khmer
- Mongolian
- Nepali
- Samoan
- Tagalog
- Tongan
- Vietnamese

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# Factsheet: Syphilis testing & treatment

Target audience:  
General population

Did you know?  
**Syphilis is a serious infection that can affect every body.**



**Get tested, treated and cured!**  
Without treatment, syphilis can seriously damage your health.



**You might not have any symptoms**  
Anyone can get syphilis – a type of sexually transmitted infection (STI).  
You might not know you have it. Get tested often to keep yourself and others safe.



**Stay safe**  
The best way to prevent syphilis is to practise safe sex – always use a condom and use water or silicone based lubricants.  
Sexual partners should also be tested regularly to stop syphilis passing back to you or to others.



**Get tested, treated and cured!**  
Treatment for syphilis is easy.  
Ask your doctor or visit a medical centre for a full STI test that includes syphilis, even if you have no symptoms.



**To talk to a trained nurse**  
Call the Sexual Health Info Line (SHIL) on 1800 451 624 Monday-Friday 9:00am to 5:30pm.  
Call 131 450 to speak in your language. Available 7 days, 24 hours.  
Visit the website [www.shil.nsw.gov.au](http://www.shil.nsw.gov.au)



**Pregnancy care**  
If you are pregnant or planning to have a baby, early testing is extra important to make sure you don't pass syphilis onto your baby.



Scan the QR code to find out more about syphilis.



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- English
- Arabic
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- Hindi
- Fijian
- Khmer
- Mongolian
- Nepali
- Samoan
- Tagalog
- Tongan
- Vietnamese

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# Factsheet: Women and Syphilis

Target audience:  
All women



**Syphilis** is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) that is passed on from one person to another during sex.

## More women aged 15 to 44 years old are getting it

Between 2016 and 2022 rates of infectious syphilis in women aged 15 to 44 years increased by 158 per cent in Australia\*.

## You might not know you have syphilis

Some people might not feel sick or know they have syphilis. It's possible to have syphilis and to pass it onto your partner without knowing it.

We recommended that you and your sexual partner get a full STI test regularly – even if you don't have any symptoms.

If you find out you have syphilis, let your sexual partner so they can also get tested and treated. This will stop syphilis passing back to you or to others.

## Syphilis symptoms are different from person to person

If you get syphilis, the first signs are sores or ulcers on the genitals, anus and mouth.

Over time other symptoms appear:

- Rashes
- Skin lesions
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Hair loss
- Muscle and joint aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue

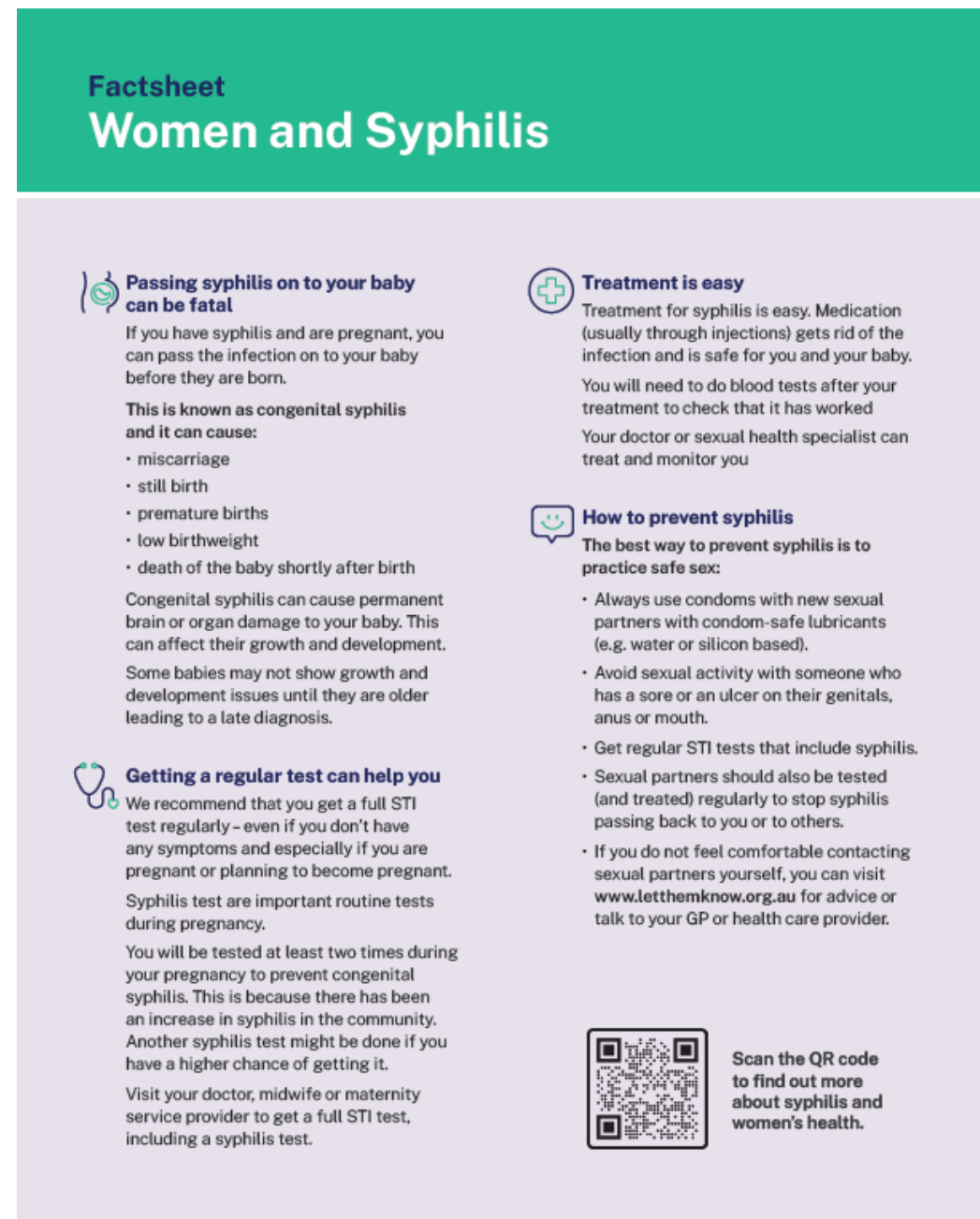
## Without treatment, syphilis can cause:

- Brain infections
- Dementia
- Lung and heart failure
- Blindness
- Death

\*Australian Department of Health and Aged Care, (2023), National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System. Available at <https://nindss.health.gov.au/npi-dash-board>



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## Passing syphilis on to your baby can be fatal

If you have syphilis and are pregnant, you can pass the infection on to your baby before they are born.

This is known as congenital syphilis and it can cause:

- miscarriage
- still birth
- premature births
- low birthweight
- death of the baby shortly after birth

Congenital syphilis can cause permanent brain or organ damage to your baby. This can affect their growth and development.

Some babies may not show growth and development issues until they are older leading to a late diagnosis.

## Getting a regular test can help you

We recommend that you get a full STI test regularly – even if you don't have any symptoms and especially if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant.

Syphilis test are important routine tests during pregnancy.

You will be tested at least two times during your pregnancy to prevent congenital syphilis. This is because there has been an increase in syphilis in the community. Another syphilis test might be done if you have a higher chance of getting it.

Visit your doctor, midwife or maternity service provider to get a full STI test, including a syphilis test.

## Treatment is easy

Treatment for syphilis is easy. Medication (usually through injections) gets rid of the infection and is safe for you and your baby.

You will need to do blood tests after your treatment to check that it has worked

Your doctor or sexual health specialist can treat and monitor you

## How to prevent syphilis

The best way to prevent syphilis is to practice safe sex:

- Always use condoms with new sexual partners with condom-safe lubricants (e.g. water or silicon based).
- Avoid sexual activity with someone who has a sore or an ulcer on their genitals, anus or mouth.
- Get regular STI tests that include syphilis.
- Sexual partners should also be tested (and treated) regularly to stop syphilis passing back to you or to others.
- If you do not feel comfortable contacting sexual partners yourself, you can visit [www.letthemknow.org.au](http://www.letthemknow.org.au) for advice or talk to your GP or health care provider.



Scan the QR code to find out more about syphilis and women's health.



South Western Sydney  
Local Health District  
Health Promotion Service



English

Arabic

Bengali

Chinese

Hindi

Fijian

Khmer

Mongolian

Nepali

Samoan

Tagalog

Tongan

Vietnamese

Order free hard copy factsheets

# Suggested text for social media

| Key message                    | Copy text  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Syphilis testing in pregnancy. | <p>Syphilis is a serious infection that can harm you and your baby.</p> <p>If you are pregnant or planning to have a baby, early testing is extra important to make sure you don't pass syphilis on to your baby.</p>  |
| Syphilis testing for all.      | <p>Syphilis is a serious sexually transmissible infection (STI) that is passed on from one person to another during sex.</p> <p>You might not have any symptoms. Without treatment, syphilis can seriously damage your health.<br/>Get tested, treated and cured!</p> <p>For more information and to find your closest testing service, contact Sexual Health Info Link on 1800 451 624.</p> |
| Women and syphilis.            | <p>Syphilis is a serious infection and more women in Australia, aged 15- 44 years old are getting it.</p> <p><u><a href="#">Learn more</a></u> about syphilis and how you can protect yourself.</p>  |



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# Social media assets: static tiles



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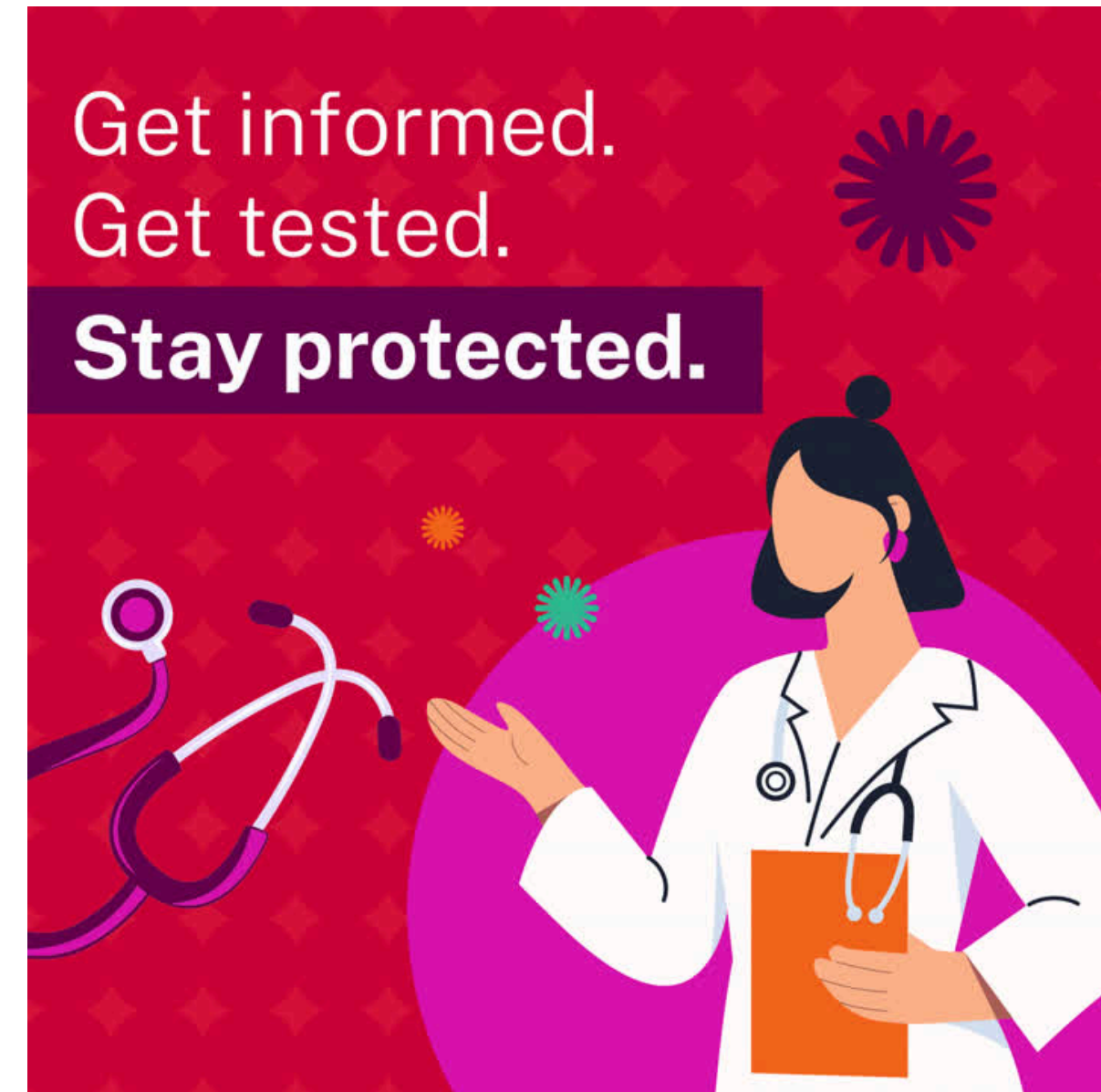
[Download here](#)



# Social media assets: animated

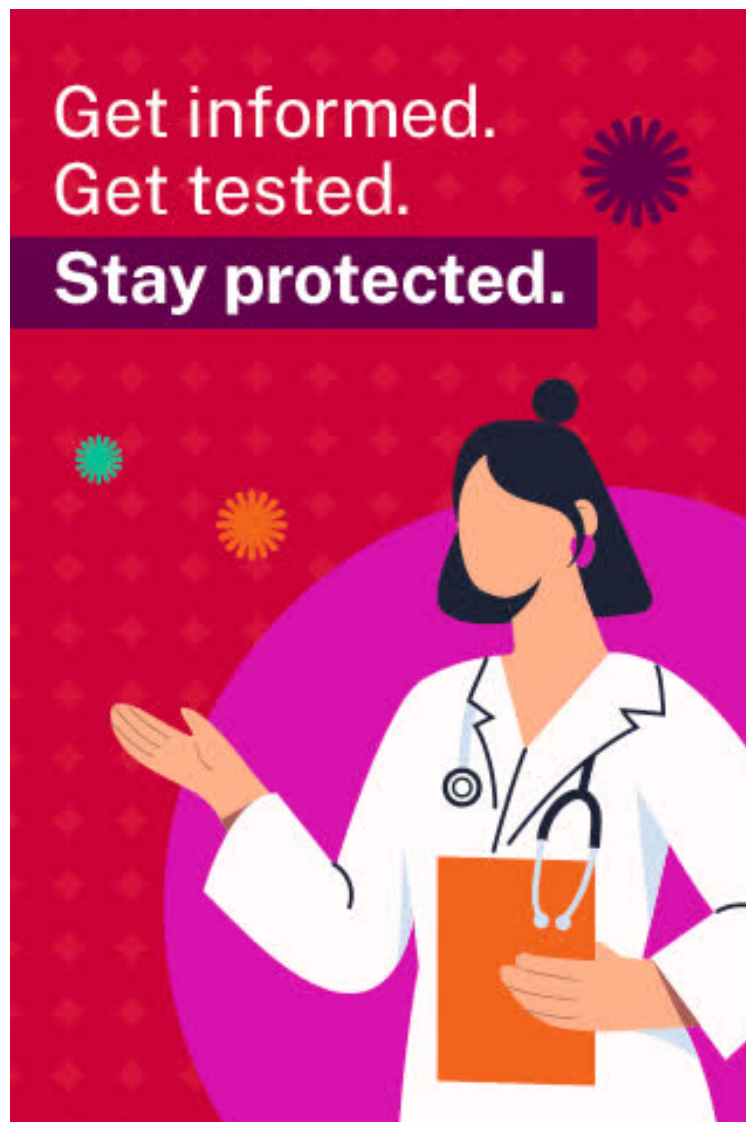


[Download here](#)

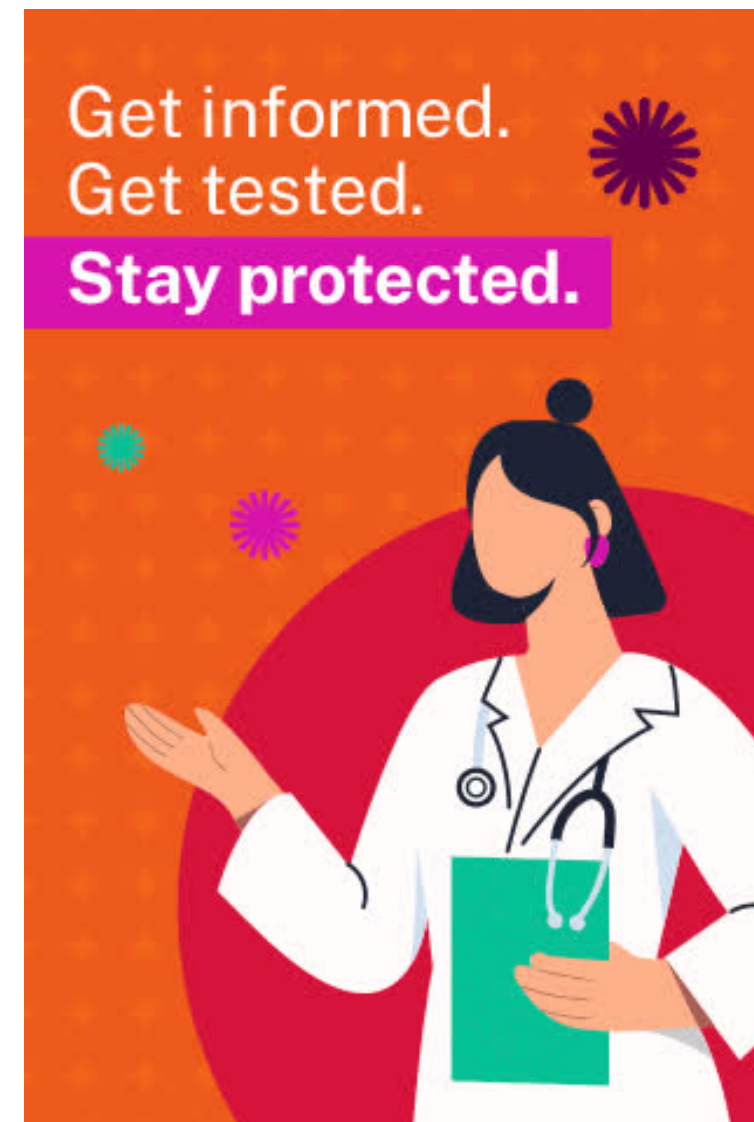


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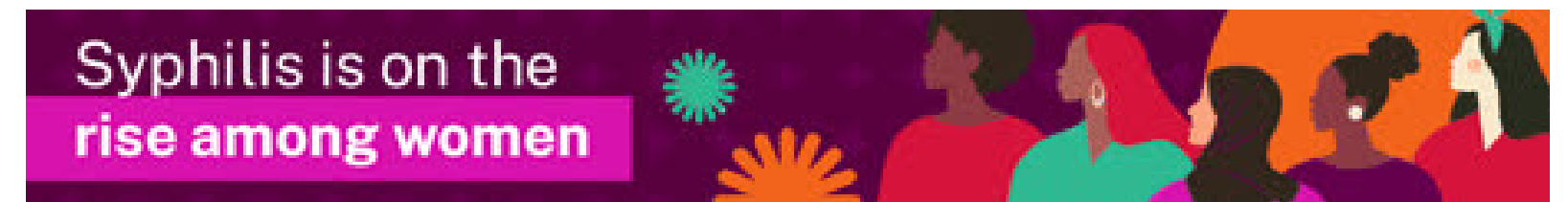
# Digital assets: animated



Digital banner



Digital banner



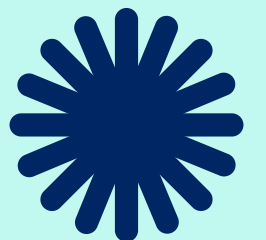
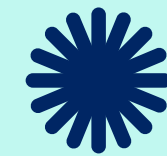
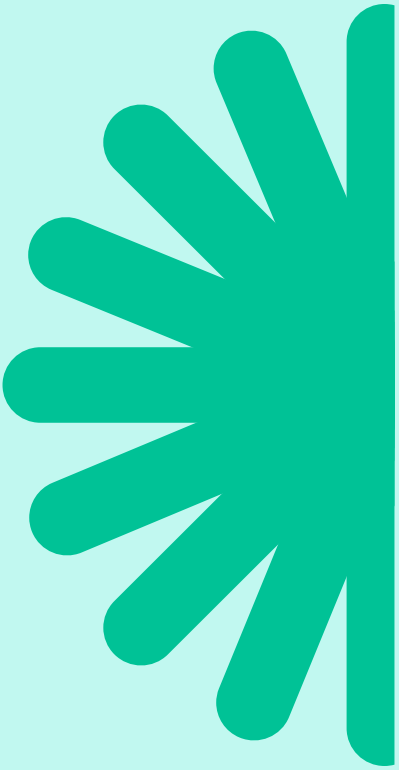
Signature block

# CALD MSM STI Campaign

This campaign aims to raise awareness and improve health literacy regarding prevention, testing, and treatment for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) among Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) from priority CALD backgrounds.

MHAHS in collaboration with 11 health facilities and organisations, identified key CALD communities in need of targeted STI information and support. As a result, campaign materials were developed in seven languages in consultation with community representatives.

These resources are suitable for use across various digital platforms, including dating and hook-up apps.





# Social media assets: static tiles



English

Arabic

Chinese

Portuguese

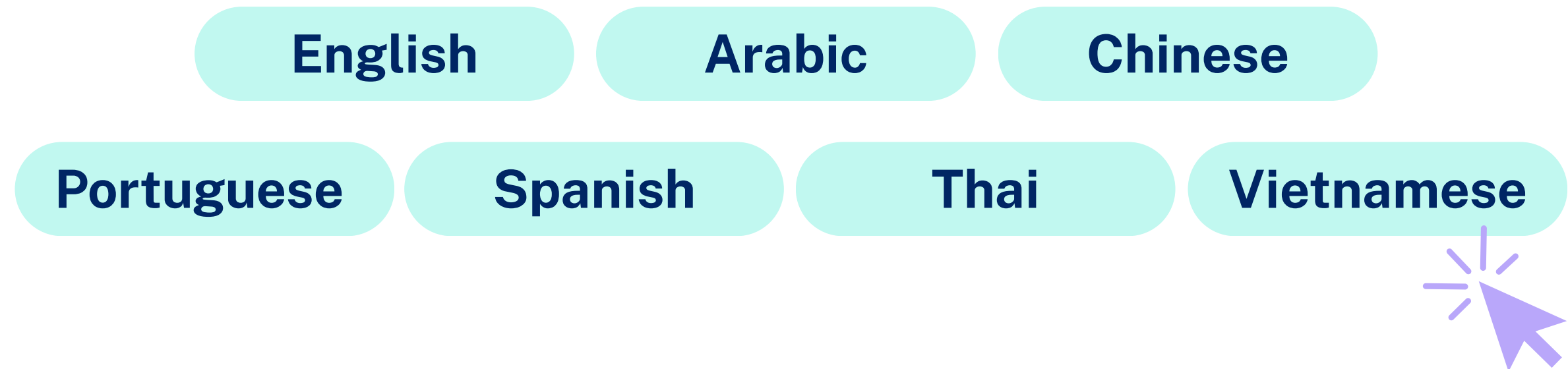
Spanish

Thai

Vietnamese



# Digital banners: **animated**



# Suggested text for social media

| Key message                 | Copy text  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Regular STI testing.        | <p>Just like checking your blood pressure, STI testing is a normal and important part of routine health check-ups.</p> <p>It is recommended every 6-12 months or more often if you have multiple partners.</p> <p>Find testing locations near you: <a href="https://playsafe.health.nsw.gov.au/sti-testing-locator/">playsafe.health.nsw.gov.au/sti-testing-locator/</a></p>   |
| STIs are often symptomless. | <p>Most STIs have no symptoms. Testing is the only way to know if you have an STI.</p> <p>Testing is easy. It can involve a urine sample, blood test or self-collected swab.</p> <p>It is quick, confidential, and free at NSW Sexual Health Clinics.</p> <p>Find out more about STIs with these factsheets and videos available in English, Arabic, Simplified Chinese, Korean, Thai and Vietnamese <a href="https://www.health.gov.au/sti/translated-resources">www.health.gov.au/sti/translated-resources</a></p> |
| STI prevention.             | <p>Whether you're in a relationship or just having fun, regular STI tests and using condoms are the best way to protect yourself and others.</p> <p>Find testing locations near you: <a href="https://playsafe.health.nsw.gov.au/sti-testing-locator/">playsafe.health.nsw.gov.au/sti-testing-locator/</a></p> <p>For more information and support call the NSW Sexual Health Info Link on 1800 451 624.</p>   |



**Re-share our posts! Keep an eye out on the MHAHS Facebook page to easily re-share social media posts.**



# STI Factsheets - International students

The International Student Health Hub features ‘The STI Facts’ series, with factsheets on various STIs available in English, Hindi, Mandarin, Nepali, and Thai.



## What is a sexually transmissible infection (STI)?

*Sexually transmissible infections (STIs) can be passed from person to person during sexual activity with someone who already has an STI.*

Sexual activity includes:

- penis in vagina (vaginal sex)
- penis in bottom/anus (anal sex)
- licking, sucking, kissing partner's genitals (oral sex)
- sharing sex toys

Using protection such as condom, dam and PrEP (for HIV only) is a great and effective way to protect you from STIs. Condoms and dams reduce the amount of skin-to-skin contact and stops the transfer of bodily fluids. Dams are only used for oral sex.

STIs are caused by a bacteria, virus or parasite.

- Bacterial STIs include chlamydia, gonorrhoea and syphilis. These can be cured with antibiotics (a tablet or injection).
- Viral STIs include genital herpes, genital warts, HIV and Hepatitis B. These can all be treated to keep you healthy.
- Parasitic STIs include trichomoniasis and pubic lice. These can be cured with creams applied to the skin or with antibiotics.

## How do I know if I have an STI?

Many STIs have no signs or symptoms so you may not know if you or your partner have one until you get an STI test.

If you have any of the following symptoms, you should avoid sex and get an STI test as soon as possible:

- unusual discharge from the vagina, penis or bottom (anus)
- pain when peeing (urinating)
- unusual lumps or skin growths around the vagina, penis or bottom (anus)
- a rash
- unusual vaginal bleeding
- an itchy vagina, penis or bottom (anus)
- blisters and sores around your vagina, penis or bottom (anus)
- warts around your vagina, penis or bottom (anus)

## How can I protect myself from STIs?

The best way to protect yourself from STIs is to have safe sex. Safe sex means always using a condom, dam and PrEP (for HIV only) for any type of sex. It is also important to have regular STI tests.



International  
Student  
Health Hub

[internationalstudents.health.nsw.gov.au](https://internationalstudents.health.nsw.gov.au)

# Service directory




## NSW Sexual Health Infolink

 1800 451 624

 [www.shil.nsw.gov.au](http://www.shil.nsw.gov.au)



## NSW MHAHS

 Level 1, 300 Bridge Road, Forest Lodge NSW


 (02) 9515 1234

 [info@mhahs.org.au](mailto:info@mhahs.org.au)



## ACON

 414 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills, NSW

 (02) 9206 2000

 [acon@acon.org.au](mailto:acon@acon.org.au)



## Family Planning Australia

 1300 372 372

 [www.fpnsw.org.au](http://www.fpnsw.org.au)

# Useful websites



## To find a doctor or GP

[www.healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services)

## Find STI testing near you

[www.playsafe.health.nsw.gov.au/sti-testing-locator](http://www.playsafe.health.nsw.gov.au/sti-testing-locator)

## Legal support (HALC)

[www.halc.org.au](http://www.halc.org.au) or (02) 9492 6540

## Let Them Know

<https://letthemknow.org.au>

**A free  
notification  
service**



# Thank you

For more information, email  
[info@mhahs.org.au](mailto:info@mhahs.org.au)



**Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service (MHAHS)**  
**Diversity Programs and Strategy Hub**

 [www.mhahs.org.au](http://www.mhahs.org.au)  @TheMHAHS

