

## STATING HEALTHY AND PREVENTION TIPS

### **What tests are recommended to help ensure the sexual health of gay and bisexual men?**

As an individual, you can do a lot to protect your health. CDC recommends the following laboratory/testing for gay and bisexual and other MSM. All of the following tests are offered at Nelson-Tebedo:

- **HIV** (at least annually)
- **Syphilis**
- **Chronic Hepatitis B** infection
- **Hepatitis C** for men who engage in risky behaviors, such as rough sex or sex with multiple partners
- **Genital Herpes** if directed by your health care provider
- **Chlamydia and Gonorrhea testing of the throat** is needed if you have had receptive oral sex in the past year
- **Chlamydia and Gonorrhea testing of the penis** (urethra) is needed if you have had insertive anal or oral sex in the past year
- **Chlamydia and Gonorrhea testing of the rectum** is needed if you have had receptive anal sex in the past year

You may want to get tested more often—every three to six months—if you have multiple or anonymous partners, have sex in conjunction with drug use, use methamphetamine, or have sex partners that participate in these activities.

### **What vaccinations does CDC recommend for gay and bisexual men?**

Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations are recommended by CDC and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) because of higher rates of infection among gay and bisexual men.

- Two doses of the Hepatitis A vaccine are needed for lasting protection and the doses should be given at least six months apart
- A series of three or four doses of the Hepatitis B vaccine are usually given providing long-lasting protection

Seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu vaccinations are also recommended.

- Each vaccine is a single dose shot given before the start of the flu season in the fall. HPV vaccine is also available for gay and bisexual men up to 26 years of age to prevent genital warts and other HPV-associated diseases and conditions (<http://www.cdc.gov/hpv>)



- The HPV vaccine is given as a three-dose series over a six month time period. It is best to be vaccinated before the first sexual contact, but later vaccination will protect those who have not been exposed to HPV.

### **What vaccinations does CDC recommend for gay and bisexual men? How do I lower my risk for STIs?**

There are three critical ways to protect yourself from STIs and HIV:

- Don't have sex (i.e. anal, vaginal, or oral)
- Be in a long-term, mutually monogamous sexual relationship with a partner you know has the same HIV status as you
- Use a condom every time you have anal, vaginal, or oral sex. Consistent and correct use of the male latex condom reduces the risk of STD and HIV transmission. It is especially important to always use a condom during anal sex, since anal sex carries a much higher risk of HIV transmission

It is also important to be honest and open with your doctor about your sexual behaviors so that he or she can give you the best and most appropriate care.

### **What other steps can I take to protect my health?**

- **Eat a healthy diet.** Choosing healthful meal and snack options can help you avoid heart disease and its complications. Be sure to eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** To determine whether your weight is in a healthy range, doctors often calculate a number called the body mass index (BMI). If you know your weight and height, you can calculate your BMI at CDC's Assessing Your Weight website at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/index.html>. Or visit [CDC's Healthy Weight website](#)
- **Exercise regularly.** Physical activity can help you maintain a healthy weight and lower cholesterol and blood pressure. Visit [CDC's Physical Activity site](#)
- **Don't smoke.** Cigarette smoking greatly increases your risk for heart disease, cancer, and stroke. So, if you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, quitting will lower your risk for heart disease
- **Limit alcohol use.** Avoid drinking too much alcohol, which can cause a variety of health problems (high blood pressure, cancer) and increase your risk of injury. Visit [CDC's Alcohol and Public Health website](#)
- **Cholesterol screenings.** The National Cholesterol Education Program recommends that adults aged 20 years or older have their cholesterol checked every five years
- **Cancer screenings.** Ask your health care provider for guidance on screening for prostate, testicular, colon, and anal cancers
- **Check your blood pressure.** Getting your blood pressure checked is important because high blood pressure often has no symptoms
- **Get checkups.** Ask your doctor or nurse how you can lower your chances for health problems



\*Adapted from “For Your Health – Gay and Bisexual Men’s Health” by the CDC’s National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STI, and TB Prevention (last updated by CDC on May 15, 2014).



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