

Sexual History is

Part of Health

Knowing your patients' sexual histories is essential to learning and understanding their health needs. This information helps identify their potential risk of getting sexually transmitted infections (STIs), also referred to as sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and allows health providers like you the chance to inform them about useful treatments or prevention methods. Be sure to take a sexual history of all your patients.

5 Factors to Assess Sexual Health

1. Number, gender and STI status of sexual partners over a given period of time
2. Types of sexual activity (e.g., oral, vaginal, anal)
3. Use of STI prevention methods (e.g., condoms, PrEP or PEP, vaccinations)
4. History of contracting any STIs
5. Desire to become pregnant or use of prevention methods (e.g., condoms, birth control)

Best Practices for Taking a Sexual History

Talking about sexual history with a patient doesn't have to be an uncomfortable conversation. When speaking with patients about their sexual history, here are some best practices to put them at ease and help you both get the most out of your conversation:

- Make sure the patient feels safe
- Inform them about doctor-patient confidentiality
- Be nonjudgmental
- Avoid assumptions
- Be sensitive and straightforward

Sample Sexual Health Questions continued on back

For further information and more resources on STDs, visit std.endthesyndemicct.org.



**Tell Everyone
to Screen & Test**

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Sample Sexual Health Questions

When it comes to taking patients' sexual histories, the CDC recommends following the 5 Ps: Partners, Practices, Protection, Past History and Pregnancy Intention. Each of these Ps represents an important aspect of sexual health you and your patient should discuss. Here are some questions you can ask them to get started:

Partners

- Are you currently having sex of any kind (oral, vaginal, anal, etc.) with anyone?
What can you tell me about your sexual partner or partners (how many, how often, etc.)?

Practices

- What kinds of sexual contact do you have?
 - Oral sex (mouth on penis, vagina or anus)
 - Vaginal sex (penis in vagina)
 - Anal sex (penis in anus)
- Are you a top (giver), or bottom (receiver), or both?

Protection

- How do you protect yourself from STDs (internal or external condoms, dental dams, PrEP, Doxy-PEP, abstinence, etc.)?
- How often do you use protection during sex (always, sometimes, never)?
- What would you be willing to do to protect yourself in the future?

Past History of STDs

- Have you ever been tested for STDs or HIV? If so, when?
- Have you ever been diagnosed with an STD or HIV? If so, when and did you receive treatment?
- Would you like to be tested for STDs or HIV today?

Pregnancy Intention

- Do you plan to have (more) children now or in the future?
- What methods are you using to prevent pregnancy?
- Would you like information on preventing pregnancy and protecting against future STDs?

Adapted from Centers for Disease Control (2024, January 10). A Guide to Taking a Sexual History. Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). <https://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/sexualhistory.htm>



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