



Consensus Statement: **Sexually Transmitted Infections Screening**

The New Zealand College of Midwives promotes discussion between midwives and women on the risks associated with Sexually Transmitted Infections during pregnancy and the options available for screening. The pregnant woman determines her risk factors following this discussion and decides whether to undertake screening based on full and culturally appropriate information.

Rationale:

- Antenatal identification of and treatment for women who have a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) is effective in improving maternal, fetal and newborn health outcomes.
- STI in pregnancy can be asymptomatic therefore a risk assessment is appropriate as part of routine antenatal care.
- Complications due to STI's can have a profound effect on the woman's sexual and reproductive health
- The presence of an STI can facilitate the transmission of other STI's for example Chlamydia, Gonorrhoea, Genital warts, Hepatitis C and HIV
- The midwife-woman partnership can facilitate a safe environment in which the woman can discuss information about her health status so that she can make an informed decision about screening for STI's.
- Referral can be made to other agencies where women can obtain further information about Sexually Transmitted Infection screening and treatment if they require it.

Guidelines/Recommendations:

Midwives are responsible for ensuring that information given to women is accurate and up to date and that they themselves have the skills and education to provide evidence informed pre- and post-test advice. It is the midwife's responsibility to ensure the woman receives the results of any test the midwife requests and to refer to and involve other agencies to support the woman particularly if partner screening is required.

Advice given by midwives should be holistic and include information on;

- potential for contracting a Sexually Transmitted Infection
- how screening is undertaken
- implications and treatment options for both the woman and her baby if screening is positive
- confidentiality, record keeping
- other services the woman can be referred to if she wishes to discuss further options about Sexually Transmitted Infection screening.

Specific consent from women for screening for any Sexually Transmitted Infection must always be obtained and the woman's decision documented in the maternity clinical records. This includes the screening for syphilis which is part of the first antenatal screening bloods. HIV screening consent is required separately.

If a woman has chosen to be screened for Sexually Transmitted Infections the midwife will:

- endeavor to give the results face to face
- provide post-test advice for all women, regardless of the result or if more appropriate refer the woman to specialist agencies for advice, tests and treatment
- be aware of the services available to refer women to if necessary
- advise the woman on the importance of the need for her sexual contacts to seek screening and medical advice
- If one STI is present consider testing for others

References:

[1] New Zealand Herpes Foundation. 2017. Guidelines for the management of genital herpes in New Zealand. 12th Edition. <https://www.herpes.org.nz>

[2] New Zealand Sexual Health Society. 2017. Sexually Transmitted Infections SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES: July. <http://www.nzshs.org/guidelines>

[3] TE WHĀRIKI TAKAPOU. 2016. *Mana* Tangata Whenua: National Guidelines for Sexual and Reproductive Health Promotion with Māori. <https://tewhariki.org.nz>

[4] WHO. 2016. Global Health Sector Strategy on sexually transmitted infections, 2016–2021: Geneva

Resources:

<https://www.healthed.govt.nz/resource/being-safer-sexually>

Family Planning NZ <http://www.familyplanning.org.nz/media/166463/poster-sti-chart-aug-2014.pdf>

Sexual Health Clinic contacts <https://www.hpv.org.nz/resources/consumer-resources/where-go-hpv-help>

Ratification:

This statement was originally ratified at the NZCOM AGM on 11 September 2008
References updated and reviewed 2018

The purpose of New Zealand College of Midwives Consensus Statements is to provide women, midwives and the maternity services with the profession's position on any given situation. The guidelines are designed to educate and support best practice.

All position statements are regularly reviewed and updated in line with evidence-based practice.