



Department of
Student Affairs
Liberating the Soul for Well-being & Flourishing



SEXUAL HEALTH — QUICK GUIDE

What are STIs?

STIs (sexually transmitted infections) are infections passed between people during sex. Some STIs cause symptoms (like discharge or sores), but many people have no symptoms. Untreated STIs can cause health problems later, so it is best to get checked.

COMMON STI SYMPTOMS: AFFECTING BOTH GENDERS

WOMEN	MEN
SORES & BLISTERS	
Painless or painful open sores, small red bumps, or blisters on genitals, anus, or mouth.	Open sores, ulcers, or blisters on penis, testicles, anus, or mouth; sometimes painless.
PAINFUL URINATION	
Burning sensation, discomfort, or frequent urge to urinate.	Burning pain, difficulty, or stinging during urination.
ITCHING & DISCHARGE	
Vaginal itching, unusual discharge (yellow, green, or foul-smelling), or irritation.	Penile itching, irritation, or abnormal discharge from the urethra (clear, white, or yellowish).
FEVER & ACHES	
Flu-like symptoms, fever, fatigue, muscle aches, or swollen lymph nodes in groin.	Fever, general body pain, fatigue, or swollen lymph nodes, especially in the groin or neck.

Disclaimer: These symptoms can vary. Always consult a healthcare professional for diagnosis and treatment. Early detection is key.

<https://www.quickobook.com/healthfeed/view/early-signs-of-stis-in-men-and-women-you-should-watch-for>

What happens at the SWS clinic? — Syndromic management

- **What it means:** Many public clinics in South Africa treat patients, based on the pattern of symptoms (a “syndrome”) instead of waiting for lab tests. For example, vaginal discharge or a genital sore is treated immediately for the most likely causes.
- **Why clinics use it:** Lab tests may take days or may not be available. Treating right away helps stop infections from getting worse or spreading.
- **What to expect:** You may be examined to confirm the symptoms you have and may be given medicines on the same day (single dose or short course). You may also be offered condoms, advice, and follow-up instructions. At SWS, you will also receive **Syphilis RPR testing** and **HIV finger-prick rapid antibody testing** as part of your assessment.



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- **Important:** Syndromic treatment is standard and can be effective, but if symptoms do not improve you should return. The clinician may then arrange laboratory testing or a different treatment.

Formal laboratory testing (e.g., Lancet Laboratories)

- **Why test:** Lab tests can show exactly which infection you have (e.g., chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis, HIV). This helps ensure the correct treatment and confirms whether partners need treatment.
- **Where to test:** Private laboratories (such as Lancet Laboratories) and some clinics offer lab testing. You will be liable to pay for these tests yourself – on the same day.
- **How samples are taken:**
 - **Urine** or **vaginal swab** for chlamydia/gonorrhoea.
 - **Blood** for HIV and syphilis tests.
 - **Swab** from a sore for ulcer testing.

Partner treatment & prevention

If you test positive or are treated for an STI, your sexual partner(s) should also be treated to prevent re-infection. Use **condoms correctly** every time to reduce risk. Consider regular testing if you have new or multiple partners.

Where to get help: Student Wellness Services (SWS)

Seek urgent care if you have heavy vaginal bleeding, severe pelvic pain, fever with genital symptoms, or rapidly spreading sores.

If you suspect you have symptoms, or your partner has symptoms, you can visit **Student Wellness Services (SWS)** for advice, assessment, testing, and treatment. Book an appointment or find clinic details here:

👉 **Book an appointment with SWS**

<https://outlook.office365.com/book/STUDENTWELLNESSSERVICEHEALTH1@mscloudtest.uct.ac.za/?ismsaljsauthenabed=true>

SWS contact Phone: 021 650 1020 / 021 650 1017 | Nurse triage: 021 650 5620.