



pregnancy care

Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

Are you pregnant? It's time to ask your doctor about STI testing. STIs are infections caused by viruses, bacteria, parasites or fungi. They're very common. And pregnancy doesn't prevent them.

In this brochure, we discuss:

- › Why STI testing and treatment are important
- › How you can help prevent STIs
- › An STI on the rise in Tennessee
- › What we can do to support you

Find a testing and treatment location

Scan this QR code with your smart device to find an STI testing and treatment location near you.



bcb.st/41dGQN4

What you need to know about STIs

All STIs can be spread through sexual contact. They can also be spread by sharing needles used to take prescription or street drugs. And some can be passed from you to your baby during pregnancy or childbirth.

Common STIs include:

- › **Chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis are caused by bacteria.** They can be cured with antibiotics. But it's important to get treated early to reduce the risk of serious or long-term health problems for you and your baby.
- › **Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a virus that attacks the immune system.** It can't be cured. But early treatment can lower the risk of spreading it to your child during pregnancy. It'll also lower your risk of developing AIDS later.
- › **Genital herpes is also a virus.** It can't be cured. But treatment can improve your symptoms and lower your risk of spreading the virus to your baby during childbirth.
- › **Trichomoniasis is a vaginal infection caused by a parasite.** It's common and curable. But if it's not treated, you're more likely to have your baby early. And your child is more likely to have a low birth weight.

Testing and treatment

STI symptoms can differ. And you may not notice any signs at all. That's why STI testing is an important part of every pregnancy.

Many doctors will test for chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis and HIV at the beginning of your pregnancy. But your doctor may recommend you get tested again later or for other STIs.

If you test positive for an STI, your doctor may prescribe you medicine, like antibiotics or antiviral drugs. Make sure to take it exactly as prescribed. If you have a partner, make sure they get tested, too. And avoid any sexual contact until you both have been fully treated.

Have questions about STIs?

Your doctor and care team here at BlueCare Tennessee are great resources. You can also find out more at [cdc.gov/sti](https://www.cdc.gov/sti).

How to prevent STIs

STI testing and treatment are important during pregnancy. But you can also help keep you and your baby safe by reducing your risk of getting an STI. Here's how:

- › **Get your vaccines.** You can be vaccinated for hepatitis B and human papillomavirus (HPV).
- › **Know your partners.** The more partners you or your partners have, the higher your risk.
- › **Use a condom.** Use a latex or polyurethane condom every time you have sex.
- › **Be aware of risky practices.** Acts that tear or break the skin carry a higher risk. Body fluids can carry STIs, too. That means any unprotected sexual contact with an infected person poses a risk.



A SYPHILIS SPIKE

Syphilis is on the rise in Tennessee. From 2017 to 2022, infection rates have gone up **162%** overall — and **311%** among women. Syphilis during pregnancy can increase the chance of your baby having health problems. And in some cases, it can lead to miscarriage or death. Help protect you and your baby by getting tested for STIs early in your pregnancy.

We're here to help

Every pregnancy is different. But we're here to support you every step of the way — from getting you the information you need to helping you set up an appointment with your doctor or at a clinic.

Here are some of the ways we can work with you throughout your pregnancy journey:

- › **Give us a call.** You can find our Customer Service number on the back of your Member ID card.
- › **Use our free CareTN app.** You can download it from the App Store® or Google Play®. The app lets you chat with a care team during your pregnancy. It gives you access to personalized information and resources. And it adds an extra layer of support. You'll just need your Member ID and the access code **bcthelppre** to get started.
- › **Go to bluecare.bcbst.com/maternity.** There, you can find information about your pregnancy and postpartum benefits (like lactation support). And you can learn more about important health visits and ways to keep you and your baby safe and healthy.



Do you need help with your health care, talking with us, or reading what we send you? If so, call us for free at:

BlueCare **1-800-468-9698**

TennCare*Select* **1-800-263-5479**

CoverKids **1-888-325-8386**

(TRS: **711** ask for **1-888-418-0008**)



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Spanish: Español ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al BlueCare **1-800-468-9698**. Llame al TennCare*Select* **1-800-263-5479**. Llame al CoverKids **1-888-325-8386** (TRS: **711: 1-888-418-0008**).

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