

# Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT)

## Frequently Asked Questions for Patients



**PLEASE READ CAREFULLY: THIS IS IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR SEXUAL HEALTH**

### Why am I getting extra medicine or additional prescriptions for medicine?

You have been diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease, also known as an STD or STI (sexually transmitted infection). Your sex partners might also be infected and need to be treated too so that they don't pass the infection back to you, onto someone else, or develop serious health problems. You are getting extra medicine or prescriptions to give to your sex partners to help treat them. This is called Expedited Partner Therapy or EPT.

### What is Expedited Partner Therapy?

Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) lets healthcare providers give extra medicine or a prescription to patients who have an STD to give to their sex partner(s). This lets partners start to take medicine to clear the infection as soon as possible if they are not able to see a healthcare provider right away.

### What is chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a common STD that you can get from having oral, anal, or vaginal sex with someone who has chlamydia. Most people who have chlamydia do not have signs or symptoms. If a person does have symptoms, these might include pain or burning when peeing, and pus or discharge from the penis, vagina, and/or anus. Even without symptoms, chlamydia can be passed to sex partners and cause serious health problems. Some of these problems might be infertility (not being able to get pregnant/get someone pregnant), pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), or ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy outside the womb). Having chlamydia can also increase your chance of getting or giving HIV. Taking your medicine for chlamydia can prevent these health problems as well as stop the spread of this infection.

### What is gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is another common STD that you can get from having oral, anal, or vaginal sex with someone who has gonorrhea. Most people who have gonorrhea do not have signs or symptoms. Symptoms of genital infection might include pain or burning while peeing, pus or discharge from penis or vagina, vaginal bleeding

between periods, or painful or swollen testicles. Symptoms of rectal (anal) infection might include anal discharge, itching, soreness, or bleeding. A symptom of oral infection may be a sore throat. Even without symptoms, gonorrhea can be passed to sex partners and cause serious health problems like infertility, pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), ectopic pregnancy, or epididymitis (swollen testicles). In rare cases, gonorrhea can also spread to the blood and joints, which can be life-threatening. Having gonorrhea can also increase your chance of getting or giving HIV. Taking your medicine for gonorrhea can prevent these health problems as well as stop the spread of this infection.

### What should I do next?

- Take all of your medicine as directed by your health care professional.
- Tell all your recent sex partners about your infection. This means anyone with whom you have had oral, anal, or vaginal sex in the past 60 days. If it has been more than 60 days since you have had oral, anal or vaginal sex, tell the last person(s) with whom you had sex. Explain that you have been diagnosed and treated for an STD and that they may have been exposed to it.
- Give your sex partners the medicine (or the prescription for medicine), and the written information that your health care professional has given you. Tell them that it is important that they carefully read all the information you give to them.
- If you are unable to give any medicine to a partner, return it to the health care professional who gave it to you. Do not share the medicine that your health care professional has told you to take yourself.
- Tell your sex partners to see a health care professional as soon as possible, and to get tested for other STDs. People can have more than one STD, and the medicine you give them will not treat other STDs.
- Do not have sex (oral, anal, or vaginal) until your health care professional tells you it is ok to have sex (this usually is seven days after you take your medicine). If you have sex too soon you could continue to pass

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infections and re-infect your partners. If you have symptoms that do not go away after seven days, contact your health care professional right away.

### **How do I tell my sex partners that I was diagnosed with an STD?**

Telling sex partners that you have an STD can be hard, but it is very important. Telling them in a private place and in a calm, open, and honest way is usually the best approach. Your partners may feel embarrassed, angry, or scared. These feelings are normal. By offering them treatment, you are showing them that you care about their health. Sometimes people worry that their partners will be angry with them, but it can be hard to know who passed the infection to whom. Since STDs usually do not cause symptoms, a person can have an STD for a long time and not know it. The most important thing is that you both can take steps to clear your infections now, and lower your chance of getting or passing STDs in the future.

### **What if my sex partners become violent when I tell them that I have an STD?**

If you think a partner could become violent, EPT may not be the best approach. Ask your health care professional for help notifying your partner. Call 911 immediately if a partner threatens you or becomes violent.

### **If my sex partners do not have signs/symptoms, should they still take this medicine?**

Yes. People with an STD may not have symptoms. Taking the medicine can cure the infection, even if they do not have symptoms.

### **What if my sex partner is pregnant or might be pregnant?**

If there is a chance that any of your sex partners are pregnant, it is very important that they contact a health care professional before taking this or any medicine. It is also very important that they get tested for other STDs, which can be passed to a baby during pregnancy or during birth.

### **What should my sex partners expect when they go to the pharmacy to pick up the medicine?**

If you give your sex partner a prescription, the pharmacist may ask for some information, such as their name, address, date of birth, form of payment (insurance, co-payment, or self-payment), pregnancy status, and

allergies to medicines. Any cost of the prescription that is not covered by health insurance will need to be paid by the person receiving the prescription.

### **What if my sex partners refuse to take the medicine?**

If any of your sex partners refuse to take the medicine, they should see a health care professional as soon as possible to be tested and treated for any STDs. Tell them that not getting treated could lead to serious health problems, and they can still pass the infection to you or others. Do not have sex with a partner who has not been treated.

### **How can I avoid getting or passing Sexually Transmitted Diseases?**

STDs are very common. Most sexually active people will get one at some point in their life. The only way to completely avoid getting or passing an STD, including HIV, is to not have oral, anal, or vaginal sex. If you do have sex, using a latex barrier, such as a condom, correctly every time you have sex (oral, anal, and vaginal) can lessen your chances of getting or passing an STD. You can also reduce your chances of getting or passing STDs by limiting the number of people with whom you have sex. Some STDs are lifelong conditions but can be managed very well with medicine or treatments that keep you healthy and reduce the chances of passing the infection to a partner.

### **Where can I find out how to get health insurance or free/low cost medical care and medicine in New Jersey?**

Information about health insurance plans and financial assistance can be found at <https://nj.gov/getcoverednj/> or by calling 1-833-677-1010. Information about free and low-cost STD testing and treatment can be found by contacting your local health department. To find contact information for your local health Department, visit <https://www.nj.gov/health/lh/>.

To find a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) that provides free or low-cost healthcare, visit <https://www.nj.gov/health/fhs/primarycare/fqhc/>.

### **What if I have more questions about EPT or STDs?**

You can get more information about STDs from your health care professional, and by visiting the website of the STD Program of the New Jersey Department of Health at <https://www.nj.gov/health/hivstdtb/stds/>.