What are chlamydia and gonorrhoea?

Chlamydia and gonorrhoea are sexually transmissible infections (STI) caused by bacteria. Both are spread by vaginal, anal or oral sex without a condom with someone who has the infection, and can cause long-term health consequences such as pelvic inflammatory diseases and infertility if untreated. Most people have no symptoms for chlamydia or gonorrhoea infections and many at-risk people do not request sexual health checks, which means the infections can be passed on or remain infective for months to years. Chlamydia and gonorrhoea are easy to test for, and most uncomplicated infections can be treated with a single dose of antibiotics.

If you are 16 years or older and live in Queensland, we invite you to participate in the 13 HEALTH webtest project. Please read about the test at www.health.qld.gov.au/13health/webtest.

Aims of the research

The project aims to offer additional free chlamydia and gonorrhoea testing options for young Queenslanders. As this is a new service, it has been set up as a research project. By using this service you agree to participate in the research project.

The aim of the research is to find out whether an online service providing alternative access to chlamydia and gonorrhoea testing, supported by a 24-hours-a-day and 7-days-a-week health information telephone service (13 HEALTH), is acceptable to young people at risk of STIs. The research is specifically interested in finding out who uses the service (age, gender, geographic location, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, STI risk score, test results), what testing methods participants prefer and what action those with positive results take (time to treatment, partner notification).

If you wish to be tested but do not wish to participate in this research project, there are other options to get tested on the ‘STI testing options’ page, available at www.health.qld.gov.au/13health/webtest. You can ask for STI testing at any general practice clinic, Aboriginal Medical Service or sexual health service, and at some community-based testing sites.

Who is conducting the research?

This study is being conducted by the Communicable Diseases Branch and Health Contact Centre (13 HEALTH or 13 43 25 84) within Queensland Health, in collaboration with Pathology Queensland and private pathology providers.

13 HEALTH is a confidential 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week health information telephone service staffed by counsellors, clinical nurses, and medical and administrative staff. All Queensland Health staff are bound by a strict legal duty regarding non-disclosure of confidential information under the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011.
Participating in this study

Your participation in this study and getting tested is voluntary. Your participation will involve providing personal information online and to 13 HEALTH staff. 13 HEALTH will have access to your personal information so they can contact you to discuss your results, other follow-up related to your care, and research questions. If you would like more information about privacy and your personal data, please read the privacy notice, available from the 'About 13 HEALTH webtest' page at www.health.qld.gov.au/13health/webtest.

You can withdraw at any time. However, it is important to note that any information you enter into the online system or that you have already discussed with 13 HEALTH staff cannot be withdrawn. If you download a pathology form or order a home mailing kit and do not submit a test within 4 weeks, 13 HEALTH staff will contact you to find out whether you intend to test or not and ask for your reasons. You can still choose not to test or wait until another time to test—just explain this to 13 HEALTH staff when they call.

How your data will be used

For research purposes, the information you provide will be grouped together with other participants’ data so it cannot be traced back to you as an individual. This de-identified and grouped data will be used to monitor and evaluate the service, write reports and publications, and recommend changes to improve the service.

Any information you provide will be entered into a database that has been built for this project. The information you provide will be stored for at least 5 years for research purposes and 28 years for individual health care. Personal information you provide is protected under the Information Privacy Act 2009. Due to the nature of the internet and telecommunication services, emails and SMS messages may be transmitted or stored via a server located outside of Australia. This is subject to service provider arrangements and is outside the control of Queensland Health. By providing your email address and mobile phone number, you consent to any transfer.

Getting more information or support

If you have any questions about participating in the research project or using this service, please contact 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) and ask for information on webtest. You may be required to give your contact details so 13 HEALTH can call you back. There is more information in the frequently asked questions for participants, available from www.health.qld.gov.au/13health/webtest. You can also get a comprehensive sexual health check and STI tests by visiting a health service. You will get a chance to run through some of these key points in a final checklist before you can request a pathology form or home mailing kit.

You may feel anxious or worried while waiting for your test results, and getting a positive result may be upsetting. If you need more information or support while waiting, or after receiving your results, you can contact:

- Kids Helpline, phone 1800 55 1800
- Lifeline, phone 13 11 14
- 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84).
Research approval

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Mater Misericordiae Ltd Human Research Ethics Committee (EC00332). Should you wish to discuss the study in relation to your rights as a participant, or should you wish to make an independent complaint, you may contact:

Coordinator/Chairperson
Human Research Ethics Committee, Mater Misericordiae Ltd
Level 2 Aubigny Place
Raymond Terrace
South Brisbane 4101
Phone: (07) 3163 1585
Email: research.ethics@mmri.mater.org.au

Contact details for research project

Dr Anita Groos
Principal Investigator
Senior Public Health Officer, Sexually Transmissible Infections
Communicable Diseases Branch, Department of Health
Phone: (07) 3328 9739
Email: anita.groos@health.qld.gov.au

Contact details for 13 HEALTH webtest

13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) is a confidential phone service that provides health advice to Queenslanders. You can phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Please phone 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84), ask for the webtest team and let them know you want more information about the research project. You may be required to give your contact details so 13 HEALTH can call you back.