

Sexual Health Centre

The Christchurch Hospital Sexual Health Centre is a specialised outpatients clinic. It's for people needing tests, treatment and follow-up for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and other associated genital or sexual health related problems.

All services are free if you're eligible for free or subsidised health care in New Zealand.

Even if you aren't eligible, screening and treating most STIs is still free.

Ask the Sexual Health Centre if you'll be charged for treatment.

Health care at the Sexual Health Centre is confidential. But if another healthcare provider, such as your usual GP has referred you to the service for advice about a particular problem, the doctors or nurses will usually write back to them to give advice.

Making an appointment

You need to make an appointment before going to the clinic.

- To make an appointment, phone **(03) 364-0485**.
- The clinic is at 314 Riccarton Rd, Upper Riccarton, Christchurch (between Westfield Riccarton Mall and Bush Inn). It has plenty of parking.
- If you have a new or urgent sexual health related problem that you're worried about (for example, a new discharge or painful sores), or you've had sex with someone who has told you they have an STI, tell the reception staff when you phone the clinic. They'll ask the health advisor to talk to you to help decide who is the best person to see you and when.
- If you have an ongoing or recurring problem that you've already seen your own GP about, please ask your GP to send a referral to the clinic. This is so the clinic doctors will have your background information and any treatments that have already been tried when they see you. It also helps make sure you can be booked with the right healthcare provider for your particular problem.





To make sure everything goes well at your visit, please:

- Be on time. If you're late for your appointment, you might have to make another appointment. If there's availability, you might have to wait until somebody can see you.
- Phone (or reply by text if you've received an appointment reminder text) to let the clinic know if you can't make it to your appointment.
- Don't pass urine (wee) for at least two hours before your appointment.
- Let the clinic know how they should or shouldn't contact you.
- Ask the doctor or nurse if there's something you want to know.
- Follow any instructions for taking your treatment.
- Go to any follow-up appointments.

Let the clinic know if there's something about your visit that isn't quite right so they can look at how to make it better.

When you arrive, the receptionist will assign you a clinic number and record your name and other contact details. They'll ask you to take a seat in the waiting area until you can see the doctor or nurse.

You may want your partner or support person to come along with you. Just be aware that you may need to discuss personal information in your consultation with the doctor or nurse.

During your consultation

You can ask to see a female or male doctor or nurse. Depending on your problem, the clinic will try to meet your preference, but sometimes it might not be able to. If you need any follow-up appointments, you'll normally see the same person, but this may not always be possible.

The doctor or nurse will first ask about what's worrying you. They'll then ask some questions to find out what's likely to have caused the problem that's worrying you. These questions can sometimes be sensitive as they include questions about your sex life, but they aren't meant to embarrass or upset you. The questions will help the doctor or nurse decide which tests you need, and which treatment is best for you. It's your choice how much information you share.

With your consent (meaning you'll be asked if it's OK), the doctor or nurse will examine you and do the tests you need. You'll be offered a chaperone (another health professional) to be with you for any genital examination. A female nurse will always be present if a male doctor is examining a female.

Generally, testing for STIs includes taking swabs and wee (urine) samples for chlamydia, gonorrhoea and trichomonas and sometimes for other infections. A blood test is also done for syphilis, HIV and hepatitis.



If you don't want other health professionals (such as your GP) to have access to your STI results, the clinic can code your test results so they don't go to the lab under your name. You can ask for this when you talk to the doctor or nurse who is doing your testing.

The clinic can do some tests while you wait but most tests will take around five to seven working days before the results come through. Some tests may take longer. The clinic will need to contact you if a test is positive or needs repeating. So, please check your contact details and the best way to contact you at every visit. If you would rather phone for your results, you'll need to quote the clinic number you got from the receptionist.

Treatment

You can get condoms for free from the clinic – just ask for them.

You may be given pills, creams or injections if they're needed to treat your problem. The doctor or nurse will tell you how to take or use any medication and give you written information. You don't need to pay for treatments that you get while you're at the clinic. Sometimes they'll give you a prescription to take to a pharmacy and there may be a charge at the pharmacy.

Contact tracing and partner notification

If you've been diagnosed with an STI, your recent sexual partners will often need to be contacted and treated at the same time to prevent the infection spreading further. The doctor or nurse may ask you to see the clinic health advisor when you're in the clinic for treatment. Or you may get a phone call from the health advisor a few days after your appointment to help you with this.

Follow-up

You may need to return for another appointment. This is usually to make sure that any treatment you've been given has solved your problem. It may also be for further treatment and advice. If you miss a follow-up appointment, the clinic may phone you to check if you're still having any problems that may need following up.

Health advisors

The doctor or nurse may ask you to see a clinic health advisor, or you can ask for this yourself. This is an important part of your visit. It gives you the chance to discuss your condition in more detail or get more information. It's also a chance to talk in a relaxed environment about anything else affecting your sexual health.

Written by HealthInfo clinical advisers and the Christchurch Hospital Sexual Health Clinic. Last reviewed May 2021.