

IMPORTANT UPDATE ON SEXUAL HEALTH TESTING ONLINE (COVID19)

30/03/20

It is now possible for people with some symptoms and for contacts of a known infection to access sexual health testing services remotely via SHL.

This change has been made in response to the prioritisation exercise recently conducted by London's sexual health NHS providers.

People with symptoms

Patients reporting the following symptoms **can now order a kit online**:

- Unusual discharge from the vagina.
- Burning when passing urine or urinating often.
- A flu like illness, fever with a general body rash.
- Generalised body itching or genital itching.
- Abnormal lumps in the genital area.

Patients with the following symptoms still **cannot order a kit online**. We continue to advise them to make contact with their local clinic for assessment:

- Discharge from the penis
- Pain or discomfort in pelvis, testicles or penis
- Abnormal bleeding from vagina
- Discomfort, discharge or bleeding from the anus.
- New cuts, ulcers or sores in the genital area.

Service users reporting symptoms are encouraged to contact their local clinic and are provided with information explaining why symptoms are often better managed in a clinical setting. A copy of the text is appended.

Users with symptoms who want to order a kit are required to acknowledge they have read this information first. They are then advised to refrain from unprotected sex and to seek health care professional support if symptoms worsen/persist.

REQUEST TO CLINICS: *When your clinics are tele-triaging patients, please give them a management plan to pre-empt if their SHL screen is negative but their symptoms persist (or worsen).*

Contacts of known infections

Service users with no symptoms can order a remote testing kit. They are advised to refrain from unprotected sex and to take their samples after the window period. They are advised to attend a clinic if they subsequently develop symptoms.

Service users with symptoms cannot order a remote testing kit. They are advised to refrain from unprotected sex and to attend a clinic after the window period.

Window periods: For gonorrhoea or chlamydia, this is two weeks after the last sexual exposure with the infected contact, and for syphilis this is four weeks.

Appendix

Text from the service user portal regarding ordering a kit when symptomatic:

You have indicated you have symptoms. It may be best that you contact your local sexual health clinic for the below reasons, but we can still offer you a self-sampling kit.

- *The following infections may be causing your symptoms but SHL does not test for them: Herpes, HPV/warts, Bacterial vaginosis, Thrush (candida), Mycoplasma Genitalium, Trichomonas, Lymphogranuloma Venereum (LGV).*
- *In clinic, you can be examined, and receive a wider range of tests e.g. pregnancy testing, to help manage the cause for your symptoms.*
- *In clinic, your symptoms can be diagnosed and treated the same day. Delays to diagnosis and/or treatment can have serious health consequences for you and your partner.*
- *Certain symptoms (such as pain or abnormal bleeding) can be suggestive of a serious condition (including life-threatening conditions such as ectopic pregnancy). Clinics will try to prioritise seeing patients with these symptoms as they are more safely managed in a clinical setting*
- *Complications develop from Chlamydia, such as pelvic inflammatory disease, fevers and arthritis, which require a different/longer course of treatment than the treatment provided by SHL online.*

I understand the above and would like to place a kit order. If my symptoms worsen/persist, I will seek further advice from a healthcare professional by contacting your local sexual health clinic, and I will avoid having unprotected sex until my results are back and my symptoms have settled.