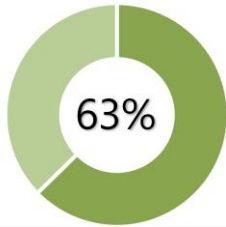


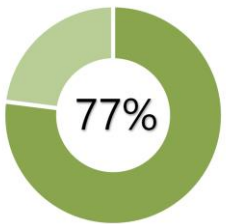
2023 Family Planning Survey on Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Prevention



1 in 5 respondents who had an STI test felt it was difficult to get one



Respondents never had a health practitioner talk to them about STI tests unless they brought it up or had symptoms



Of 16–19-year-olds had never had a health practitioner talk to them about STI tests

Family Planning surveyed 1023 people

We asked about their experiences accessing STI testing, treatment, education and information, and ways we could improve equitable access in Aotearoa. Most survey respondents identified as women and girls.

STIs are a public health issue

There are considerable numbers of STIs in Aotearoa and increasing numbers for some STIs, including gonorrhoea and syphilis. There were over 25,000 cases of chlamydia in 2022. In the short term, STIs can cause pain and discomfort. In the long term, STIs can cause illness, chronic health issues, and even death.

STIs can lead to infertility

For women and girls, chlamydia and gonorrhoea can cause pelvic inflammatory disease, which can lead to infertility, chronic pelvic pain, and poor pregnancy outcomes. Syphilis, if left untreated, can cause neurological and cardiovascular health issues, and, if transmitted to a developing foetus during pregnancy, can cause stillbirth.

"I have never been offered one. I have never been asked about my sexual activity."

"They tested me for gonorrhoea and chlamydia, but I was too ashamed to ask for more."

"Way too many of my women friends have been pressured to use no condom with hook-ups."

"It's ridiculous you have to pay for a doctor's appointment just to authorise [so] you can get an STI check at lab tests."

"Make it like a covid test- remove barriers to getting the test and also remove the stigma if you have an STI"

"We can only protect ourselves when we truly understand the risks and how to be safe."

47%

Respondents reported being asked about getting an STI test at the time of a cervical screen



Respondents said that a partner refusing to use condoms would stop them using condoms with a new or casual partner

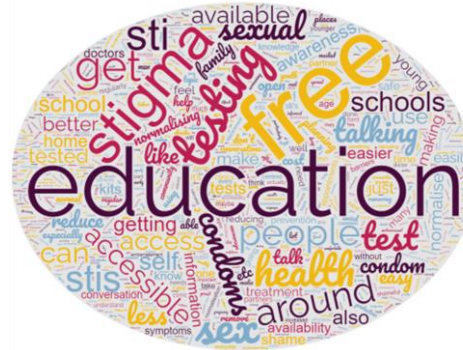


Respondents reported that STIs were covered as part of relationships and sexuality education (RSE) at school

85%

Respondents want information about STIs shared to students at school as part of RSE

There were 761 written responses to the question “What do you think would make the biggest difference to help reduce STIs in Aotearoa.”



Respondents identified systems barriers to good sexual health, such as long wait times to get an appointment. People reported that stigma and shame about STIs needs to be addressed, including attitudes that people who get STIs are dirty and promiscuous.

The main themes show that people want: more, better education, increased awareness and information, less stigma, improved access to testing and condoms, less discrimination based on gender and sexuality, and a public health approach to prevention.

Key recommendations

- Prioritise STIs as a health issue in primary care, particularly for young people and Māori and Pacific people.
- Increase STI training opportunities for health practitioners in primary care to support implementation of current primary care STI guidelines.
- Fund free and low-cost options for testing including: drop-in self-testing and at home self-testing kits.
- Incorporate STI testing into the new HPV screening programme.
- Appropriately resource Māori and Pacific communities to expand access to STI information, resources, and free condoms.
- Expand resources and support to teachers and schools for relationships and sexuality education, ensuring it is consistent, culturally safe, and responsive and integrates STIs into learning about healthy relationships, consent, and gender.