

A guide to – Partner Notification

It is important to stress that your personal details are kept confidential and any person who attends the clinic as a result of partner notification will not be given any information about you.

What is Partner Notification?

Partner notification is a confidential process whereby your sexual partner is told that they have been in contact with a sexually transmitted infection (STI). Your partner can then receive the medical advice, tests and any treatment they might need. Partner notification is especially important because many people who have an STI do not notice anything wrong. Partner notification is an important way of helping to stop STIs being passed from person to person, and can stop you from getting the infection again.



Do not worry if you don't know much about the STI, or about how to tell your partner about it. Specially trained staff in the sexual health clinic understand this and will help and support you by giving you information and answering your questions. This discussion is private and confidential.

The partner notification discussion

Partner notification usually begins with a discussion with a healthcare professional (a sexual health adviser, nurse or doctor) when you attend for the results of your tests and treatment. If you have come to the clinic with someone else (e.g. a family member, a friend or sexual partner) it is usually suggested that you are seen on your own. This means that you can talk openly and freely.

The healthcare professional will ask you questions about who you have had sex with. This includes, where possible, personal details about the other person such as their name, date of birth or age and where they live. You may not know all these details but it is important you give us as much information as you can. This information is used confidentially to check that your partner has attended clinic and is very important in making sure they get the right tests and treatment.

The discussion will also help to identify which of your previous sexual partners should be informed. This depends on several factors including which type of infection you have. If you have sex with a partner who has not been tested and treated you may get the infection back.

Types of Partner Notification

You tell your partner

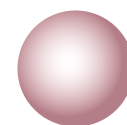
Most people who are diagnosed with an STI tell their partners about it themselves. We can give you a 'contact slip' to give to your partner. This contains information about your infection which your partner can take to the sexual health clinic to make sure they receive the right tests and treatment. The contact slip does not have your name on it.

We tell your partner

If you don't want to tell your partner, the healthcare professional can tell them for you. They will do this without giving your name. This is usually done by telephone, but sometimes other ways are used: letter, text or e-mail. The way we contact your partner will be agreed after you have discussed it with the healthcare professional.

What next?

At the end of the discussion you will have decided on a plan about how to inform your partner or partners. If you are going to speak to your partner, we will arrange to talk with you after you have spoken to them, to check how this went and to identify any problems you may have encountered. This is usually done by telephone. We will then check that your partner has attended a clinic. However, we will not be able to give you any information about their attendance.



This leaflet was produced by the Clinical Effectiveness Group of the British Association for Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH).

More information:
www.bashh.org/guidelines

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