

TAKING A SEXUAL HISTORY

Your patients' sexual history is an important part of their overall health and wellness. Taking a sexual history will help guide the physical exam, screening of all exposed sites for sexually transmitted infections (STI) and establish your patients' STI/HIV risk.

Take a sexual history from all patients

The 5P's of Sexual Health

Partners

Number and gender of partners over a given time

Practices

Types of sexual practices – oral, vaginal, anal

Protection from STIs

Use of condoms and other methods

Past History of STIs

Establish risk of repeat infections, HIV status and hepatitis risk

Prevention of Pregnancy

Desire of pregnancy and use of prevention methods

“It is important we discuss your sexual practices. I speak with all my patients about many different aspects of their lives.”

The 5P's: Sample Questions

Partners

- In the past 12 months, how many sexual partners have you had? Men? Women? Both? Transgender?

Practices

- In the past 12 months, have you had vaginal sex? Oral sex? Anal sex?
- *For men who have sex with men*—Are you the receptive partner (“the bottom”)?

Protection from STIs

- How do you keep yourself from getting infected?
- Do you use condoms consistently? If not, in which situations are you more likely to use a condom?

Past History of STIs

- Have you even been diagnosed with an STI, such as HIV, herpes, gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis, HPV or trichomoniasis? When?
- Have you had any recurring symptoms or diagnosis?
- When was your last HIV test?

Pregnancy

- Are you trying to conceive or father a child? Do you want to avoid pregnancy?
- Are you using contraception or practicing any form of birth control?
- Do you need any information on birth control or a referral?

To assess HIV and Hepatitis risk, ask:

- Have you or any of your partners been diagnosed HIV or hepatitis C?
- Have you or any of your partners injected drugs?

Best practices for obtaining a sexual history

Ensure a safe patient environment

Assure confidentiality

Be non-judgmental

Be sensitive and matter-of-fact

Avoid assumptions

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