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# Sexual health

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Our clinics offer a free and confidential sexual health and contraception service to everyone in [Blackpool](#), regardless of your age, gender or sexual orientation. We won't judge or lecture you, we've seen it all before.

## What is a sexually transmitted infection (STI)?

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are passed from one person to another through unprotected sex or genital contact. Some of the most common STIs are genital warts, chlamydia, genital herpes, gonorrhoea, syphilis and HIV.

## HIV

Advancements in treatment now mean the sooner HIV and other sexually transmitted infections are diagnosed and treated, the better the treatment outcome and the lower the risk of passing it on to others.

It's important to seek medical advice as soon as possible if you think you've been exposed to HIV and a good idea to get tested if you have a new partner. You can get tested in a number of places, including your GP practice and sexual health clinics. You can find your local [HIV testing service](#) on NHS Choices

[HIV home testing](#) is available to those who fit the eligibility criteria.

The risk of HIV is higher in groups like men who have sex with men and Black African communities.

Around one in six newly diagnosed cases are in people over 50, so HIV isn't something that just affects younger people.

The best way to protect yourself from contracting any STI is by practising safe sex and using condoms with all new and casual partners

## What are the symptoms of a sexually transmitted infection?

Some sexually transmitted infections don't cause any symptoms, so if you've had unprotected sex, or the condom has split, you should get tested to be on the safe side.

If you experience any of the following symptoms, you should seek advice from your GP or the sexual health services listed on this page:

- Unusual discharge from the vagina
- Discharge from the penis
- Pain or burning when you pass urine
- Itches, rashes, lumps or blisters around the genitals or anus
- Pain and/or bleeding during sex
- Bleeding after sex
- Pain in the testicles
- Pain in the lower abdomen

**Did you know over 3,000 people who tested positive for gonorrhoea last year were over 45 - It's not too late to get tested**

# Where to get a sexual health check

It is quick and easy to get a sexual health check (STI test) in Blackpool. If you are a Blackpool resident, you can do this in the following ways:

- Contact one of the [GPs listed below](#) to arrange an appointment (you **do not** need to be a registered patient)
- Contact to book an appointment or drop-in at the [NHS Blackpool Sexual Health Services \(Whitegate Drive\)](#)
- Contact [Connect](#) to book an appointment or drop-in if you are aged under 25
- Online full [STI testing kits](#) available
- Speak to your own GP for advice

Did you know 28,000 people who tested positive for an STI last year were over 45 - It's not too late to get tested

## What is involved in a sexual health check?

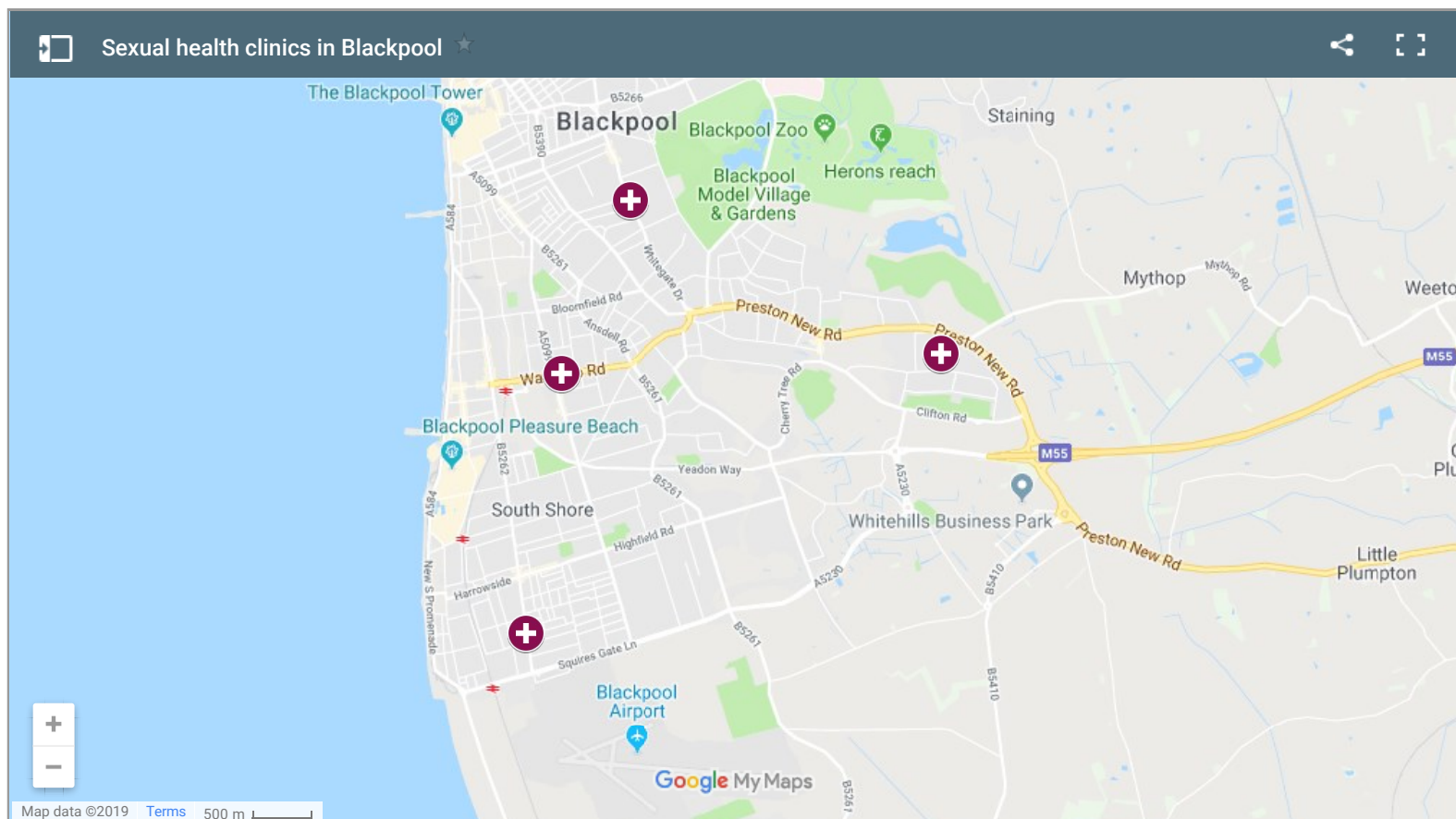
A routine sexual health (or STI test) check is free and appointments normally last about 15 minutes. Results are provided to you over the phone, via post or in person, depending on which clinic or GP you visit.

## Contraception

Contraception helps protect you from pregnancy. There are different methods to choose from. You can find out all about them and the different methods such as long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) at [sexwise](#).

## GP surgery contact details

You **do not** need to be a registered patient to book your free STI test with the GP surgeries listed below:



Practice	Address	Telephone
Harris Medical Centre	Kentmere Drive, Blackpool FY4 4TW	07585 509689
Stonyhill Medical Practice	575 Lytham Road, Blackpool FY4 1TJ	01253 956655

## Related links

Sexually transmitted infections - more can be [read about STIs](#) on the NHS website

[Contraception](#)

[Emergency contraception](#)

[Abortion counselling](#)

Home testing for HIV: [FreeTesting.hiv](#)

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