

**LET'S
TALK
ABOUT
YOU**

Partner Services

If you have been told that you have a sexually transmitted disease (STD) and/or Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), your health care provider and someone from the Health Department's Partner Services Program will talk with you about disease transmission and prevention. They will ask you about your sexual partners who may have been exposed to the infection. If you use drugs, you will be asked about your needle sharing practices and partners without judgment or incrimination.

This is Partner Services (PS).

Partner Services is a free, confidential, and voluntary Department of Health program that offers many services that help reduce the spread of STDs and HIV in the community. Partner Services staff work with people diagnosed with syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia and/or HIV infection to reach others who may have been exposed to these infections. Partner Services staff can also offer support, coordinate referrals for patient/partner disease screening and treatment, and provide information on how to protect yourself and your sex and/or needle sharing partners against becoming infected.

Why Should I Participate?

Finding out that you have an STD and/or HIV can be difficult. Some people may feel angry, scared, embarrassed or ashamed. Deciding how to tell your partners is another issue that you have to deal with that can also be difficult. Few people are comfortable talking about their sex life or drug use. However, when you have an STD and/or HIV, talking with Partner Services is very important because they can assist you in notifying your partners discretely, privately, and confidentially. When people know they have been exposed to an infection and get tested and treated, it helps reduce the spread of disease and promotes health in the community.

You might ask yourself, "Why should I care?"

- Besides the possibility of you becoming re-infected, other people who have sex with your partners can also become infected. If your partner is not treated, the disease can be passed along to other individuals, and could even be passed from a mother to her child during pregnancy or at the time of birth.
- Some STDs have no symptoms but can cause serious long-term health issues if left untreated. HIV symptoms may not show up for many years. Early STD and/or HIV diagnosis and treatment can mean a longer and healthier life.
- After the initial shock, many people contacted by Partner Services are glad they were told they may have been exposed to an infection. They are able to get testing, treatment, other services and take care of themselves while preventing the spread of infection to others in the community.
- If you have an STD and/or HIV, you can talk with Partner Services now and you can contact them in the future if you have new partners who need to be told about possible exposures.

"I was very shocked and upset when the health department came to my door but I got over the initial embarrassment and was tested. I will never know who gave my name but I am glad they did."

Types of Partner Services Assistance:

• Anonymous Third Party Notification

Someone from the health department notifies your partners of exposure to an STD/HIV using information that you provide. Third Party Notification can also be completed through the Internet by Partner Services staff. Your name and identity are never shared with your partners. They will only know that they have been exposed to an STD and/or HIV and are provided options for testing and treatment for disease exposure.

• Dual Disclosure

You notify your partner with the help of Partner Services staff. Partner Services will be with you during the entire process and can answer your partner's questions. This method can be very effective, since you may not have all of the facts or information about the exposure to direct your partner to testing and treatment options.

• Self-Disclosure

You notify your partners and encourage them to get testing and treatment services. Partner Services will help you plan and practice what you are going to say. Some people prefer this method but it does not protect your identity. You may have to deal with negative reactions from partners who you self-notify. Though you may have good intentions to self-notify, things happen; the timing may not be right; you may not see that partner again; or when you do, you just cannot find the right words. If you cannot carry out self-notifications, you and Partner Services can revisit the plan and they can contact partners for you.

"I wanted to tell him... but I got too nervous and just couldn't do it."

We all have a role in eliminating STD/HIV.

Partner Services can help you. Contact the New York State Health Department Partner Services Program:

Long Island Region	1-800-462-6786
New Rochelle Region	1-800-828-0064
Capital District Region	1-800-962-5065
Central New York Region	1-800-562-9423
Rochester Region	1-800-962-5063
Buffalo Region	1-800-962-5064

Local health department phone numbers and more information can be found at www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/std/partner_services/



Department
of Health