

# Adopting a Universal Screening Approach for Chlamydia (CT) and Gonorrhea (NG)

## What is universal screening for CT/NG?

Universal Screening for chlamydia is similar to “opt-out” testing. Providers set a practice protocol to screen all sexually active women 24 years old and younger and sexually active women 25 and older who are at an increased risk for chlamydia and gonorrhea without regard to their reported sexual activity. Patients are able to request an exception to the protocol and not be tested.

## Why is universal screening different from what I am currently doing?

We find that many providers believe that their patients are already “opting-out” of screening for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Research shows that slight differences in the conversation may change the acceptance rate because women feel more comfortable.

## What does the conversation look like?

The following sample language is helpful during exams when discussing sensitive topics with patients such as CT and NG screening.

- ▶ “We automatically screen all female patients ages 15-24 for chlamydia and gonorrhea every year, regardless of their sexual history. Getting screened is an important part of staying healthy.”
- ▶ “Chlamydia and gonorrhea are common infections that usually have no symptoms, so you could be infected even if you don’t have symptoms.”
- ▶ “STI testing is easy. We can test a urine sample or self-collected vaginal swab.”
- ▶ “Chlamydia and gonorrhea can cause lifelong problems like infertility if they aren’t detected and treated. Luckily, they can be treated easily with antibiotics if they are detected early.”
- ▶ “We will contact you privately if any tests are positive and provide treatment for you and any sexual partners.”

