

STD AWARENESS MONTH



CDC Digital Toolkit



A message from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) [Division of STD Prevention](#)

STDs in the United States

STD Awareness Month, observed each April, is an opportunity to raise awareness about what STDs are and how they impact our lives; and understand why it's important to prevent, test for, and treat STDs. The surge of STDs endangers the health of too many in the United States (U.S.). [According to the CDC](#), from 2013-2017:

- Syphilis cases nearly doubled
- Gonorrhea cases increased by 67 percent
- Chlamydia cases remained at record highs

Given this data, STD Awareness Month is a timely reminder to continue to raise awareness about STDs, take action to mitigate the increase in STDs in the U.S., and reduce STD-related stigma, fear, and discrimination.

Pick the CDC STD campaign that works for you

Choose from four of our most popular, updated campaigns:

- *Treat Me Right*
- *Syphilis Strikes Back*
- *Talk. Test. Treat.*
- *GYT: Get Yourself Tested*

Our goal is for these campaigns to help you, our prevention partners, address the unique needs of the communities you serve and extend the reach of your STD prevention services. The campaigns have a variety of STD prevention focuses and audiences for you to choose from, as well as a collection of complementary materials and content you can tailor as you see fit. You may wish to focus on one campaign entirely or to select and curate elements from different campaigns.

Get the most out of this toolkit

This toolkit functions as a guide to help partners understand each campaign's theme and target audiences, and the corresponding materials available. It also includes tips on how to use the campaigns to enhance your planned activities, things to consider during implementation, and a collection of helpful resources to use during STD Awareness Month and beyond. This toolkit does not provide information on how to develop your own campaign nor is it a guide on how to implement a campaign. However, you can find links to resources that can assist you in those endeavors in the assessment section (*see [Step 3: Assessment](#) on pg. 7*).

Thank you for your continued commitment to STD prevention, for joining us in raising awareness, and making a difference in our communities. We look forward to seeing your work in action across the nation throughout April. We cannot protect the public's health without you.

STD AWARENESS MONTH

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Overview of Campaigns

The table below provides an overview of each campaign to help you decide which campaign(s) to implement according to the prevention focus in your community. Click the hyperlinked campaign titles to navigate to the campaign website.





Pointers on Picking the Campaign that Works for You

As you are trying to decide which campaign to use, think of the following:

- What are your objectives?
- How are STDs impacting your community?
- Who is your target audience?
- What behaviors do you want to influence?
- How will you measure campaign success?

Each campaign provides a similar offering of companion materials that you can use throughout April – web and social media graphics, a customizable article, sample social media content, and a widget (i.e., a device you can embed on your website that enables information to be displayed on your website without redirecting users. The STD Awareness Month widget is an STD/HIV testing site locator.)

If you are looking for a campaign with additional planning guidance, *Syphilis Strikes Back* and *Talk. Test. Treat.* are your best options. Both campaigns include suggestions for weekly themes focusing on different campaign-related topics that can be used throughout April. There is also the option to pull elements from multiple campaigns and create a unique plan of action, or to supplement your current plans, according to your target audience or focus.

Campaign	Description	Audiences	Focus
 <p>Treat Me Right</p> <p>*Spanish resources available</p>	Underscores the need for strong patient-provider relationships to overcome the rising STD burden.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare Providers • Patients • Health Departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness • Communicating • Testing • Treatment • Self-advocacy • Patient-centered care
 <p>Syphilis Strikes Back</p>	Highlights the resurgence of syphilis and the specific threat it poses to gay and bisexual men, pregnant women, and newborn babies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gay and Bisexual Men • Pregnant women • Healthcare Providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness • Education • Prevention • Testing • Treatment
 <p>Talk. Test. Treat.</p>	Focuses on educating individuals and healthcare providers about the three simple actions they can take to protect their health/their patient's health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare Providers • General Public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating • Testing • Treatment
 <p>Get Yourself Tested</p>	Encourages young people to get tested and treated for STDs and HIV.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Awareness • Testing



Treat Me Right

Treat Me Right is a campaign for healthcare providers and their patients that highlights the importance of fostering a trusting patient-provider relationship and empowering patients to know what they can do to stay healthy. STD prevention partners can share campaign resources with providers and patients, including a suite of digital campaign materials.

You Will Find Information Such As:

Patients

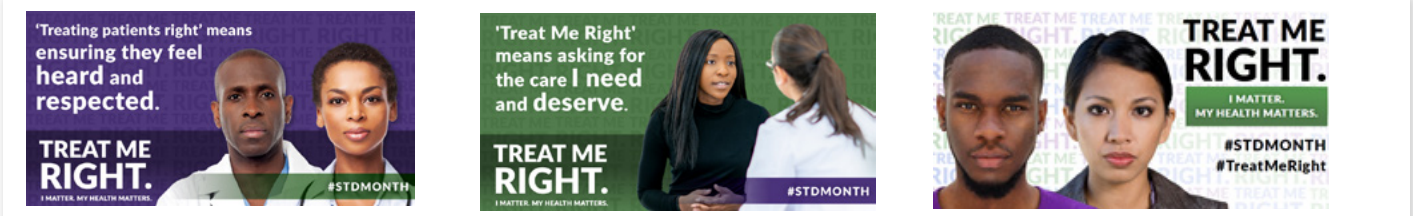
- Tips to identify a supportive healthcare provider
- STD testing recommendations
- A guide to help individuals take charge of their sexual health
- Sexual health questions to ask and expect when talking with a provider
- Treatment advice after testing positive for an STD

Providers

- Cultural competency training
- A list of essential sexual health questions
- How to collect a thorough sexual history from a patient
- Tips to ensure productive provider-patient conversations
- Current STD screening recommendations and treatment guidelines

Campaign Materials:

Social Media Graphics



Sample Social Media Messages

When provider-patient relationships work better, so does #sexualhealth. Learn more: <https://go.usa.gov/xEHh9> #STDMonth #TreatMeRight

With #STDs rising, it's never been more important to stand up for your sexual health. Get started today: <https://go.usa.gov/xEHhN> #STDMonth #TreatMeRight

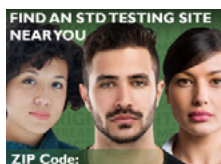
Make the most of your doctor visit! Think through your questions before you go and prepare for what they may ask you: <http://www.ncshguide.org/provider-visit/provider-questions> #TreatMeRight #STDMonth

With #STDs at a record high, it's never been more important to protect your patients' sexual health. These tools can help: <https://go.usa.gov/xEHhQ> #clinicalguidance #TreatMeRight #STDMonth

Materials



A [customizable article](#) that can be adapted and shared to spread the word about STD prevention.



A [widget](#) that can be added to your website to enable visitors to locate a STD testing facility.



Syphilis Strikes Back

Syphilis Strikes Back is a campaign devoted exclusively to promoting the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of syphilis. The campaign artwork seeks to raise awareness, help healthcare providers protect their patients, and empower individuals to take charge of their health. STD prevention partners can find information on the populations most affected by syphilis—gay and bisexual men, women and newborns—in addition to a suite of digital campaign materials.

You Will Find Information Such As:

Gay & Bisexual Men

How to lower risk for syphilis & other STDs

Tips for talking with partner(s) about sex and STDs before sex

Resources to find a LGBT-friendly healthcare provider

STD testing recommendations

Women & Newborns

Data on syphilis in women, pregnant women, and newborns

Tips for talking with partner(s) about sex and STDs

What congenital syphilis is, how it can affect babies, & how to prevent it

STD testing recommendations

Healthcare Providers

How to obtain routine sexual histories from patients

How to talk to patients about STD prevention methods

Suggested reporting language for syphilis serology testing

Current STD screening recommendations and treatment guidelines

Suggested Weekly Themes:

Week 1: *Syphilis in the U.S.* – An overview of what syphilis is, how it is affecting specific communities, and why this potentially dangerous health issue needs attention.

Week 2: *Syphilis among gay and bisexual men* – Focus on the group that has been hit the hardest by syphilis, and outline action steps for gay and bisexual men and their healthcare providers.

Week 3: *Syphilis among women, pregnant women, and newborns* – Focus on the increase in syphilis among women, the resulting impact on pregnant women and newborns, as well as what women and their healthcare providers can do to help.

Week 4: *Disrupt Syphilis!* – Focus on what actions are needed to combat syphilis moving forward.

Campaign Materials:

Social Media Graphics



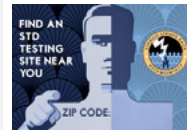
Materials



Sample tweets and Facebook posts to use throughout April for prevention partners on social media.



A customizable article that can be adapted and shared to spread the word about STD prevention.



A widget that can be added to your website to enable visitors to locate an STD testing facility.



Talk. Test. Treat. encourages individuals and healthcare providers to take three simple actions – *Talk. Test. Treat.* – to protect their health, the health of their partners, and that of their patients. The campaign reinforces that all STDs are preventable and treatable, and most are curable. STD prevention partners will find resources and guidance for both providers and individuals, including a suite of digital campaign materials.

You Will Find Information Such As:

Individuals

Tips for talking with partner(s) and providers about sexual health and STDs

A source to find confidential, free, or low-cost testing nearby ([GetTested](#))

STD testing recommendations

Tips to get the correct treatment for a STD if an individual tests positive

Healthcare Providers

Counseling messages to alleviate patient concerns after a STD diagnosis

Current STD screening recommendations and treatment guidelines

Tips for talking with patients about sexual health

Important treatment topics like Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) and drug-resistant gonorrhea

Suggested Weekly Themes:

Week 1: An overview of the campaign theme and how preventing STDs can be simple with these three actions: *Talk. Test. Treat.*

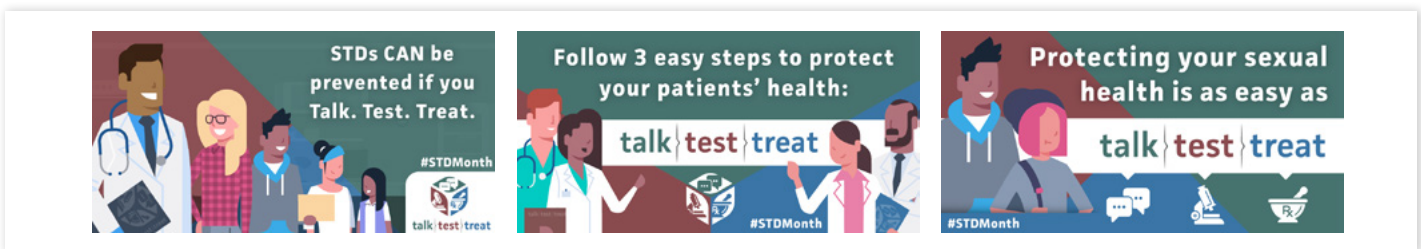
Week 2: TALK: Talk openly to partners, patients, and healthcare providers about sexual health and STDs.

Week 3: TEST: Ensure everyone knows who should be tested and when.

Week 4: TREAT: The important role healthcare providers and patients play in making sure STDs are treated correctly.

Campaign Materials:

Social Media Graphics



Materials



[Sample tweets and Facebook posts](#) to use throughout April for prevention partners on social media.



A [customizable article](#) that can be adapted and shared to spread the word about STD prevention.



A [widget](#) that can be added to your website to enable visitors to locate an STD testing facility.

GYT Get Yourself Tested (GYT)

GYT: Get Yourself Tested is a campaign encouraging young people to get tested and treated for STDs and HIV to protect their health and that of their partners. The campaign highlights the idea that preventing, testing for, and treating STDs is very straightforward. STD prevention partners can share resources and guidance for young people, including a suite of digital campaign materials.

You Will Find Information Such As:

Know the Facts

- Facts debunking myths about STD prevention and testing
- A source to find confidential, free, or low-cost testing nearby ([GetTested](#))
- Tips to empower youth on what to expect when getting tested
- STD testing conversation starters

How to GYT

- The importance of speaking openly and honestly about sexual health with a healthcare provider
- A guide to prepare young people for their provider visit
- STD testing recommendations

Campaign Materials:

Social Media Graphics



Sample Social Media Messages

#DYK: 15-24-year-olds account for 1/2 of all new #STD infections. This #STDMonth, find out more about STD testing and how it can prevent STDs. #GYT <https://go.usa.gov/xEHhy>

Untreated #STDs can lead to serious health problems. Get Yourself Tested for #STDMonth. <https://go.usa.gov/xEHhp> #GYT

Clinicians: Not sure when adolescents should get tested for #STDs? @CDCSTD has some guidance that can help. <https://go.usa.gov/xEHhf> #adol #GYT #STDMonth

Many #STDs have no symptoms. The only way you can be sure of your status is to Get Yourself Tested. <https://go.usa.gov/xEHhv> #STDMonth #GYT

Materials



A [customizable article](#) that can be adapted and shared to spread the word about STD prevention.



A [widget](#) that can be added to your website to enable visitors to locate an STD testing facility.

Planning for STD Awareness Month

This section provides some tips on how to integrate your chosen campaign(s) into your STD Awareness Month activities. The following ideas illustrate a unique opportunity to reach and engage with consumers, healthcare providers, and organizations in your community. It is important to remember that your STD Awareness Month activities should ultimately support your organization's goals. In addition to the information below, HIV.gov has a helpful [planning guide](#) to assist you while planning for Awareness Day events, activities, and outreach.

Step 1 Identify Your Target Audience and Primary Goal

Before deciding which activities to implement, be sure to identify who it is you're aiming to reach and your primary goal (e.g., promote chlamydia testing among young women, educate healthcare providers about how congenital syphilis is impacting your community and specific actions they can take, etc.). Once you identify your audience and particular goal, you can explore the ideas below to help formulate your plans.

Step 2 Identify Your Activities

Digital Campaigns

Digital campaigns are helpful if your goal is related to awareness and education. There are many mediums (e.g., social media platforms, your organization's website, local media outlets) available to help you expand your reach to a broader audience. The CDC STD campaign that you select can supplement any existing digital activities you plan to implement, or it can be your primary activity.

Tips to consider:

- Tailor the campaign content to meet your needs. Insert local data where applicable, customize the sample content with information about local events, and make it relevant to your audience.
- Do not forget your call to action. For example, if you are sharing testing information from Talk. Test. Treat., connect people to a local testing center. [CDC's GetTested website](#) can help you do that.
- When creating content for social media, remember the phrase "Mobile First"! Over 70 percent of social media users access content using a smartphone. For more social media information and resources, visit CDC's [social media website](#).
- Amplify your messages through outreach. Use the customizable article with an urgent call to action to spread the word about STD prevention to groups such as your partners, local decision makers, or the general public.
- Explore and use the features available on different digital platforms for creative ways to share campaign materials (e.g., Instagram stories, posts on partner websites, email newsletters).

Testing Events

When planning an STD testing event, it is essential to develop a project plan with goals, roles and responsibilities, and ways to measure success. CDC has a [simple guide](#) to reference for planning an event. If you are taking the lead on a testing event, reach out to local organizations you can collaborate with for a more significant impact. You may also find that other organizations may already be planning a testing event. If so, consider joining forces or sharing plans for a coordinated effort.

Planning for STD Awareness Month

Tips to consider:

- Engage your community. When it comes to STD prevention, we rely on many traditional and nontraditional partners (e.g., community organizations, healthcare providers, and businesses) to help achieve goals. Examine your network to determine whom to involve in your event and in what capacity.
- Promote your event! Use campaign graphics to create promotional materials like posters to advertise your event online and in local areas that serve your target audience. The [GYT campaign](#) has a collection of materials you can use to help support these efforts.
- Educate people when they come for testing. [The Facts brochures](#) can be useful in this instance. Be sure to explore the campaign websites for links to other printable resources as well.
- Link people to care. If a person tests positive for an STD during your event, make sure you have procedures in place to ensure they are made aware of their treatment options and next steps. Information from the [Treat Me Right](#) campaign can empower individuals to take the steps towards confidently seeking treatment.

Community Events

Whether it is a town hall, a 5k run/walk, or a special program with speakers, a community event provides a unique opportunity to connect with many people for an extended amount of time. If you are not hosting an event, consider attending, promoting, or supporting partner events as a way to help spread your STD Awareness Month messages.

Tips to consider:

- If your organization is planning the event, use materials from the campaigns to display at the event venue/location and share campaign information during the event.
- If you are working in partnership with another organization, supply relevant campaign materials as your organization's contribution to the event or highlight the campaigns as a helpful resource.
- Tailor the campaign content to meet your needs. You can combine sample messages from the campaigns with information about your event in promotional messages.
- Promote valuable resources. Community event settings, where people can converse and engage with each other, would be an ideal place to share useful resources featured in this toolkit. There will be representation from numerous health professionals and organizations that may not be able to implement the campaigns but could benefit from other resources.

Remember, these are just some of the different activities you can do. You can focus on one or many activities depending on your capacity and goals. Since activities tend to overlap, the tips from each section can be helpful no matter what you decide to do.

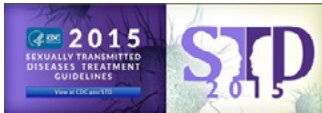
Step 3 Assessment

After implementing your activities, it is beneficial to assess what worked, what did not, and opportunities for improvement. Analyzing your efforts can help you optimize your positive impact on health and reduce STDs! When you begin, it is essential to understand the reasons why you want to measure performance. What do you intend to do with the results before beginning? How will you use any lessons learned in the future?

The CDC has a variety of [tools and templates](#) you can use to develop your health communication and social marketing campaigns and programs. For detailed health communication and social marketing evaluation assistance, check out these [resources](#). If you are interested in more targeted resources, CDC DSTDP has [an evaluation manual](#) that is specifically designed for sexually transmitted disease programs and activities.

Resources

Use and share these resources to strengthen your organization's STD prevention and treatment work throughout the year and empower the communities you serve. From this page, you can link to a few highlighted STD prevention resources or find a comprehensive list [here](#).



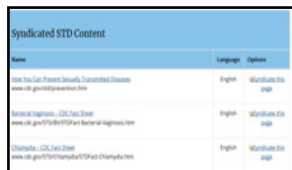
[2015 STD Treatment Guidelines](#)

CDC's current clinical guidance on STD prevention, diagnosis, and treatment is available online, and as a wall chart, pocket guide, and free mobile app for [Apple](#) and [Android](#) devices. [Questions and answers](#) from clinical and CDC experts about the guidelines are also available.



[GetTested](#)

A national STD, HIV, and hepatitis testing locator to find nearby free or low-cost testing.



[CDC Web Content Syndication Service](#)

Add CDC STD information to your web site to ensure that your STD content stays up-to-date. For more information on how to syndicate content, visit the [FAQ](#) page.



[The Facts Brochures](#)

Plain language STD brochures that are available for download and [order](#) in English and Spanish.



[Sexual Health and Your Patients: A Provider's Guide](#)

A guide for better integrating sexual health conversations and recommended preventative services into routine visits with patients.