

STIs and Agricultural Workers: What You Need to Know?



Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are infections caused by small germs such as bacteria, viruses, or parasites in blood, semen, vaginal and other body fluids. A person can get an STI when they have sex with someone who already has an STI and they do not use protection, like the use of condoms, dental dams, or getting vaccinated. If these infections happen frequently or are not treated, they can hurt your body and make it harder to have children.¹

How Do STIs Affect Agricultural Workers in the U.S.?

Agricultural workers may have a higher chance of getting STIs than other groups because of these challenges²:

- **Hard to get health care:** Agricultural workers may not get care when they are sick because they may not have health insurance, may not be familiar with the U.S. healthcare system, or may not know where to go. This could make it harder to treat these infections and can cause more health problems.
- **Language barriers:** Some agricultural workers speak languages other than English, which can make it harder to talk with doctors about how to stay healthy and avoid infections.
- **Culture and norms:** Culture and traditions can make agricultural workers feel shy or scared to openly talk about their sexual health. They may not get the important information they need about STIs, safe sex practices, and where to get STI testing.

The table below includes the most common STIs among agricultural workers. It is important to become familiar with the symptoms and treatment options available for each infection. If you think you are at risk or have some of these symptoms, you should see a doctor or health care provider as soon as possible.¹

Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI)		Symptoms	Treatment
Caused by a Virus	Human Papillomavirus (HPV) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genital warts (small skin growths) • No visible symptoms at times • Can cause cancer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescribed ointments or minor surgery • Some vaccines available
	Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatigue • Dark urine • Abdominal pain • Yellow skin and eyes (jaundice) • Can cause liver damage and liver cancer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescribed antiviral medications • Some vaccines available
	Genital Herpes (Type 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No visible symptoms at times • Blisters in mouth, genitals, or anus • Flu-like symptoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescribed antiviral medications
Caused by Bacteria	Gonorrhea and Chlamydia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painful urination • Abnormal discharge from penis or vagina • Pain in lower abdomen and genitals • Can cause infertility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescribed antibiotics
	Syphilis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sores or ulcers • Rash • Fever • Flu like symptoms • Can cause severe organ damage if not treated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescribed antibiotics

Images Source: WebMD³

Why is STI Testing Important?

Testing can:

- Prevent other complications:** Some STIs do not show any symptoms, making it hard to spot them. STIs that are not treated can lead to other health problems like organ damage, infertility, and cancer. When tested, you can catch infections early and get treatment quickly.
- Protect yourself and others:** You and your partner(s) can stay safe by testing regularly or at least every 3 months. If you or your partner(s) find out you have an STI, you should see a doctor or health care provider as soon as possible. They can give you treatment to lower the chances of spreading it.

- **Help you take control of your health:** Knowing you are free of STIs brings peace of mind. Test regularly to take charge of your own health and make informed choices about your sexual activities and relationships.

Where Can I Find STI Testing and Treatment?

If you think you might have an STI or want to get tested, you can go to these places in your community for help:

- [Local Health Centers](#)
- [Local Testing Sites](#)
- [Local Health Departments](#)
- [Planned Parenthood Clinics](#)

These places can offer free or low cost STI testing and treatment. Remember, these services are confidential and only you and your doctor will know what is discussed during your visit. Health providers are there to help and answer any questions you have.



Una Voz Para La Salud
Call for Health



(scan code)

Contact NCFH's
**Call for Health
Program**

at 1 (800) 377-9968
or through **WhatsApp**
at 1 (737) 414-5121
to get connected with a
health center near you!

Why Should I Talk About STIs?

It is important to talk about STIs respectfully and openly with your partner(s), so you both feel more comfortable, understood, and supported. These conversations can break down judgement and stigma about sexual health by talking about testing and treatment often and as a normal way to prevent or overcome STIs.

Talk about STIs and take control of your sexual health!

To access this information in a printable trifold format, [click here.](#)



This publication is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$1,742,242.00 with 0 percentage financed with nongovernmental sources. The content is that of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.

1. CDC. "CDC - STD Diseases & Related Conditions." What are STDs?, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 7 July 2023, www.cdc.gov/std/general/default.htm.
2. NCFHP. "Farmworker Health Facts." NC Farmworker Health Program, 19 May 2023, <https://ncfhp.ncdhhs.gov/farmworker-health-facts/>
3. "Std Pictures: Herpes, Genital Warts, Gonorrhea, STD Symptoms, & Testing" Sexual Conditions , WebMD, 14 Jan. 2023, www.webmd.com/sexual-conditions/ss/slideshow-std-pictures-and-facts.