

# Our services for men who have sex with men

At Gateway Clinic, we provide a range of services to protect your sexual health and wellbeing.



## Screening for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

If you're sexually active, regular screening for STI's is the most reliable way to reduce your risk of infection. Spectrum offers comprehensive screening for the following STIs:

- chlamydia
- gonorrhoea
- HIV
- Syphilis
- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis C

The only way to know if you have an STI is to take a test. If you're worried, but don't currently have any symptoms, you can test discreetly using our "**Test No Talk**" service. This is a walk in and wait service that we run on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday mornings between 10-12 am and on Wednesday between 5-7pm. Only testing is available through this service – if you have any concerns you wish to discuss or think you need vaccines, you will need an appointment.

## Vaccinations

Spectrum also offers health and wellbeing vaccinations to protect you against blood-borne viruses (BBV).

### Hepatitis B vaccination

Hepatitis B is a virus which spreads through infected blood or bodily fluids and can cause serious damage to the liver if left untreated. Although many cases of hepatitis B are mild and will resolve on their own, around 1 in 10 people will require treatment. Anyone can be vulnerable to this infection, but your risk is greater if you have multiple sexual partners or any history of intravenous drug use.

To protect against hepatitis B, Spectrum offers a course of vaccinations. We usually give three injections (with a month in between) and then a 4<sup>th</sup> injection after one year. After your vaccination, we will complete a blood test to make sure you are fully protected.

## **Hepatitis A vaccination**

Hepatitis A is a virus which also affects the liver and is typically spread by ingesting food or drinks contaminated with infected faeces. Hepatitis A is rare in the UK and usually has no symptoms. However, you might be at greater risk of infection if you:

- Have recently travelled to a place where hepatitis A is more common (e.g., South America, Africa, Russia, Asia)
- Are a man who has sex with men (MSM)
- Have any history of injecting drugs
- Have been in close contact with an infected person, including as a caregiver.

Vaccinations for hepatitis A are available in Gateway Clinic. We recommended two injections: the initial vaccination and a second reinforcing dose around 6-12 months later.

If you have recently travelled abroad and had vaccines, you may already be protected against hepatitis A. If you're unsure and would like to check, we can provide a blood test.

## **HPV vaccination**

The Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is an infection which can cause genital warts and some HPV-associated cancers, including cervical cancer and some mouth and throat cancers. The risk of HPV infection is greater if you;

- have had multiple sexual partners
- have a compromised immune system (e.g. as a result of HIV or immunosuppressant drugs).

HPV vaccination can be provided for men up to and including the age of 45 years. A course of 2 injections are usually given 6 months apart, but this may vary. Please speak to one of our clinicians for more information.

# HIV support

## **PrEP - Reducing your risk of HIV**

PrEP stands for Pre-exposure prophylaxis – it is a pill which protects you from HIV. PrEP is extremely effective at reducing your risk of HIV and can be taken every day or around each episode of sex.

- PrEP is intended to protect you from HIV.
- It is not required if you use condoms for sex.
- PrEP is available on the NHS, and we provide this from clinic, along with regular checks whilst you are taking it. If you would like further information, please make an appointment or visit

[www.iwantprepnow.com](http://www.iwantprepnow.com)

## **PEPSE - Protection after exposure to HIV**

PEPSE (Post-exposure prophylaxis) is a one-month course of tablets that you can take if you have been exposed to HIV - for example, if you have had unprotected sex with someone who is known to have HIV and is not receiving treatment.

After exposure to the HIV virus, you have up to **72 hours** to start taking PEPSE - but the sooner you start it the more effective PEPSE it will be.

If you think you have been exposed to HIV, make an appointment with us as soon as possible. Tell the receptionist that you think you need this treatment, and they will arrange for someone to ring you back the same day.

## **U=U (Undetectable = Un-transmittable)**

When people with HIV are on effective treatment, the virus becomes 'undetectable' in the blood – sometimes known as an 'undetectable viral load.' People with undetectable levels of the virus cannot transmit HIV to a partner through sex. **U=U** means that you don't need to use condoms if you were only using them to stop HIV transmission.

For people living with HIV, good adherence and taking your HIV tablets every daily is essential for U=U. Missing your tablets just once will not change your viral load, but missing it for 2-3 days might have an effect on the amount of virus in your blood and means you cannot rely on U=U

**For more information, visit [www.sexual-health.co.uk](http://www.sexual-health.co.uk) or call Gateway Clinic on 0800 0556442.**