

Building conversations into consultations

If someone comes to me to ask for emergency contraception then I always offer them a chlamydia test. Patients are receptive when they realise how quick and easy it is to do and when they learn that they can do it themselves. This is also a great time to speak to them about other forms of contraception too. (GP)

We have a clear care pathway for our travel clinics. This includes offering a chlamydia test so that they can be sure they don't have chlamydia before going away. We also provide information on safe sex. If they are female, we ask them what type of contraception they currently use as perhaps one of the long-lasting forms may be more suitable if they are going to be away for a long time. (Practice nurse)

If I have a patient consultation with an under 25 year old, I ensure I have a chlamydia test to hand. I use this opportunity to also ask if they have recently had a test and point out that it's part of a national campaign and everyone under the age of 25 is being offered one. (GP)

When talking about sexual health with young people it's important to remind them to always use a condom when having sex with a new partner and to continue to do so until they have both been tested for STIs and are using another form of contraception.

When talking about contraception and sexual health, I tell young people that condoms are available for free on the NHS and they can find out where to get these from at www.nhs.uk/worhtalkingabout (Practice nurse)

When we talked to young people while developing the campaign, they told us they valued healthcare professionals' input in helping to make informed decisions about sexual health. They had a number of pointers on how to help them start talking about these issues.

Tell us that the contraceptive implant goes underneath the skin – it can't be seen.

We want to know that there are 15 types of contraception so talk us through some of the lesser known ones, e.g. LARCs like the coil or implant.

Tell us that we do not have to 'be inspected' and that the chlamydia test is easy to do ourselves!

For men, we need to know that you just have to pee in a pot to do a chlamydia test.

Remind us that although other types of contraception protects against pregnancy, only condoms protect against STIs.

Have leaflets and web addresses like www.nhs.uk/worhtalkingabout to hand so that when we leave our consultation we can find out more about contraception, STIs and sexual health.

Talk to us about chlamydia testing not screening.

Let us know that chlamydia can be invisible and if left untreated, could lead to health problems and may cause infertility.

Don't be afraid to ask men what type of contraception they use with their partner. My girlfriend and I are both aware that it's a joint responsibility.

Use all opportunities to offer us a chlamydia test and talk to us about contraception even when we are visiting for other health reasons. We expect doctors and nurses to talk to us about these issues.

Tell us that chlamydia testing is routinely being offered to everyone under 25.

Sex
worth talking about

A Healthcare
Professional's Guide

Sex. Worth Talking About is a campaign to help young people make more informed choices about contraception, chlamydia testing and to look after their sexual health.

It seeks to normalise everyday conversations about safer sexual practices to create an open, positive and supportive environment for young people to ask questions, find out more and voice concerns.

When we talked to professionals across the NHS, they told us about a number of issues that prevent conversations about contraception and chlamydia testing, including;

- how to actually open and initiate these conversations
- time pressures
- having the knowledge or right information to answer all the questions that they might be asked

This leaflet contains ideas based on NHS professionals' experiences of overcoming these issues. We hope these will provide you with practical tips to support you in making these conversations part of your everyday role. The following organisations also provide more information to improve knowledge and confidence when in consultation with patients:

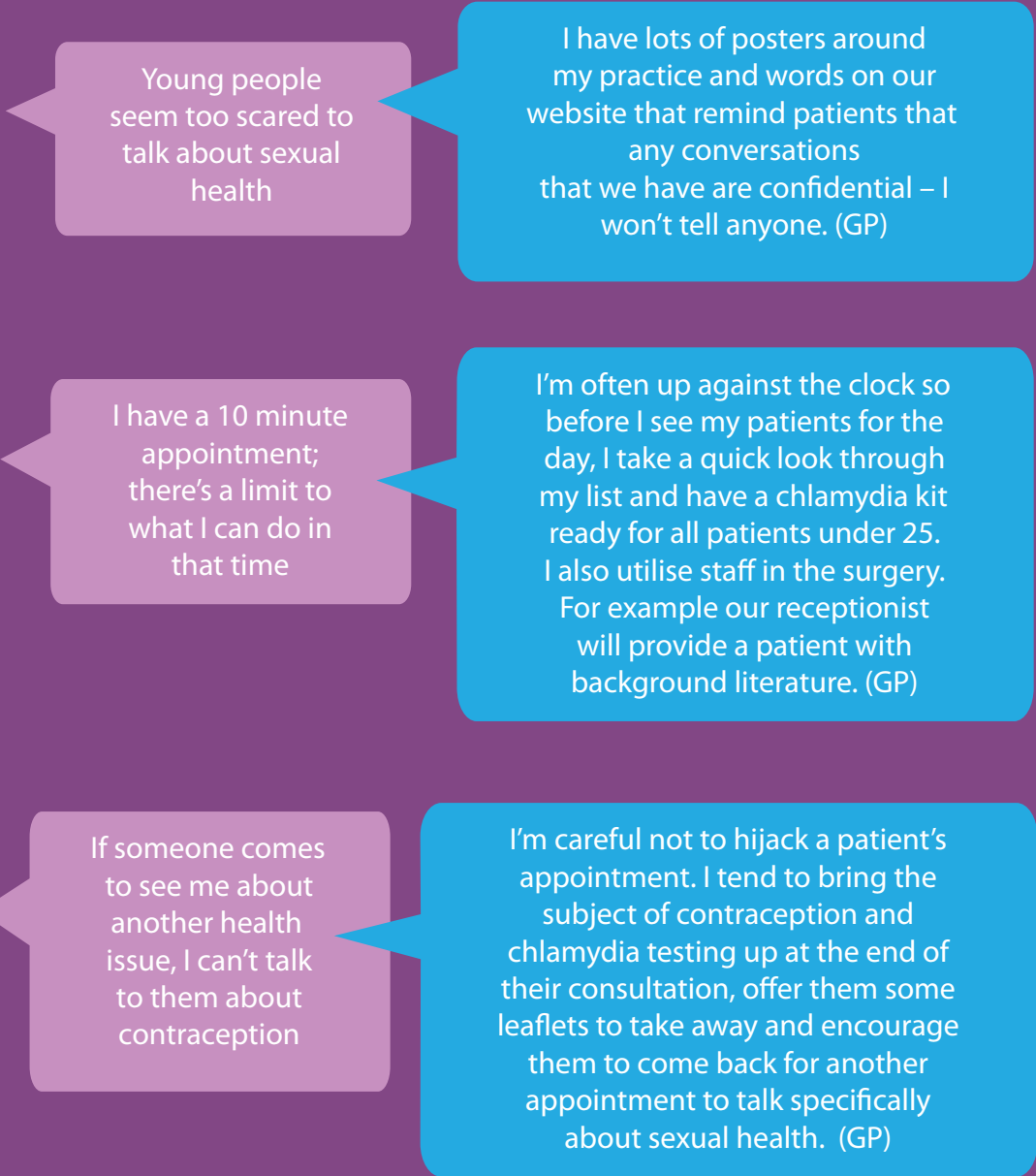
www.BASHH.org/education_and_careers

www.rcn.org.uk/development/learning

www.RCGP.org.uk - for the introductory certificate in sexual health

<http://www.pharmacyplb.co.uk/Sexualhealth.aspx>

Practical tips to make conversations easier and quicker



Conversation starters

A recent survey found that young people want to talk about sexual health and contraception*.

There are lots of opportunities to start conversations on these topics; an appointment for a repeat pill prescription presents a good opportunity to move the conversation onto contraceptive choices, chlamydia testing or other sexual health matters including STIs.



To learn more about the campaign and for regular updates, please visit:

www.nhs.uk/sexualhealthprofessional

For further information on the topics discussed in this leaflet please contact:

Brook

Confidential advice for under 25s.
0808 802 1234 or
www.brook.org.uk

FPA

The sexual health charity providing free information and advice to everyone.

FPA's helpline: sexual health direct 0845 122 8690 or www.fpa.org.uk

National Chlamydia Screening Programme

www.chlamydiascreening.nhs.uk

Terrence Higgins Trust

Information, support and advice on HIV and sexual health

0845 12 21 200
www.tht.org.uk

*Define Research, April 2009