

# SEX

*and the college  
male athlete*



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The Partnership for Male Youth  
Washington, DC  
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**The Partnership for Male Youth (PMY)**, a non-profit organization founded in 2013, is the only US national organization whose sole focus is on the health and wellbeing of adolescent and young adult (AYA) males, or those between the ages of 10 and 25. Its mission is “to work with and on behalf of AYA males to optimize their health and ensure that they thrive,” and its activities range from research to advocacy in the realm of AYA male health. Its board is composed of nationally known leaders in the field of adolescent health and medicine.

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Being a college athlete means you're all about pushing your limits and excelling in sports. But here's something equally crucial: your sexual health. Yes, hitting the gym and the field is important, but so is keeping an eye on your sexual well-being. Interestingly, your athletic pursuits might even have perks for your sexual health.

However, it's been found that college athletes, including guys like you, might take more risks in their sexual lives, often having more partners compared to other college students. For instance, a study revealed that 60% of male college football players had over five sexual partners. Yet, only a third always played it safe during sex, and some had misconceptions about sexual health, like underestimating the effectiveness of condoms in preventing STDs or thinking you can catch STDs from toilet seats.



Here's something to chew on: your performance on the field and in the gym might not be impacted by your sexual activities. It really boils down to personal factors—what feels right for you might not for someone else. So, listening to your body is key in finding that sweet spot where you excel in both your sport and personal life.

Staying on top of your sexual health, like getting regular check-ups and practicing safe sex, isn't just about avoiding diseases; it's about maintaining your peak performance and nurturing your relationships. It's all part of being a top-notch athlete.

Think you might need to get checked for an STI? Don't sweat it. You can get tested at your school's health services or reach out to a healthcare provider. We've got a list of resources at the end of this brochure to help you out.

And just so you know, the STIs that commonly affect guys can vary, influenced by where you live, your lifestyle, and your access to healthcare. Being informed is your best defense, so make sure you're up to speed on how to protect yourself and maintain your health on and off the field.

### Some of the most common STIs among men include:

**Chlamydia:** Chlamydia can infect the urethra, rectum, and throat. It is often without symptoms but can lead to serious health complications, like pain or swelling of testicles if left untreated. Symptoms may include pain or burning during urination, clear discharge that looks and "feels" like pre-ejaculate fluid from the penis. Chlamydia can be cured with antibiotics and can be prevented with an antibiotic immediately post-exposure.

**Gonorrhea:** Gonorrhea can infect the urethra, rectum, and throat. Like chlamydia, it can be asymptomatic but is more likely to cause symptoms. It can also cause serious health complications, like pain or swelling of testicles if not treated. Symptoms may include a pus-like, milky-white discharge from the penis, burning or pain while peeing. Gonorrhea can be treated with antibiotics and can be prevented with an antibiotic immediately post-exposure.

**Syphilis:** Syphilis progresses through stages if left untreated. It can cause sores, rashes, and, if untreated, lead to serious complications such as organ damage. Most cases of syphilis in the US are among men. There is a blood test for syphilis, and it can be treated with antibiotics and can be prevented with an antibiotic immediately post-exposure.



**Genital herpes:** can cause painful sores in the genital and anal areas. It can also have no symptoms but still be transmitted to sexual partners. There is a swab test for herpes and treatment is possible although there is no cure.

**Human papillomavirus (HPV):** HPV is a group of viruses that can cause genital warts and is associated with several types of cancer, including anal, penile and throat cancer. Throat cancer is more prevalent among men than women. HPV is most commonly spread through skin-on-skin infection. Researchers believe that more than 70% of sexually active people have HPV. In men, some types of HPV can cause genital warts. Currently there are no tests for men. There is no treatment for HPV, although there is a vaccine to prevent it.

**HIV/AIDS:** HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) attacks the immune system, making it harder for the body to fight off infections and diseases. If untreated, HIV can progress to AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome), which is a serious and potentially life-threatening condition. There is a test for HIV. It can be treated with medicines to help you stay healthy. HIV can be prevented with pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, which comes in either pill form or can be administered as an injection every two months. PrEP is only for people who are HIV negative.

**Trichomoniasis:** Symptoms may include abnormal genital discharge that may be yellow-green in color, itching or irritation in the genital area, painful urination, and discomfort during intercourse. In men, symptoms may include irritation inside the penis, burning after urination or ejaculation, and discharge from the penis.

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It's important to note that individuals infected with these STIs may not always experience symptoms, and some symptoms may overlap with other conditions. Therefore, testing and consultation with a healthcare provider are crucial for accurate diagnosis and treatment.

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### Male college students have several options for accessing healthcare services:

**Campus Health Center:** Many colleges and universities have on-campus health centers that offer a range of medical services, including routine check-ups, vaccinations, STI testing, and treatment for minor illnesses and injuries. These services are often convenient and may be covered by student fees or insurance plans.

**Primary Care Physician:** Some students may prefer to continue seeing their established primary care physician if they are attending college close to home. They can schedule appointments with their doctor's office for routine care or medical concerns.

**Urgent Care Centers:** For non-emergency medical needs outside of regular business hours or when the campus health center is closed, students can visit urgent care centers. These facilities provide walk-in medical care for a wide range of conditions, such as minor injuries, infections, and illnesses.

**Telehealth Services:** Many colleges offer telehealth services that allow students to consult with healthcare providers remotely via video calls or phone calls. This option can be convenient for students who are unable to visit a healthcare facility in person.

**Local Health Clinics:** Students can also seek healthcare services at local health clinics or community health centers located near their college campus. These clinics may offer a variety of medical services at affordable prices, including primary care, STI testing, and reproductive health services.

**Student Health Insurance Plans:** Most colleges and universities offer student health insurance plans that provide coverage for medical services both on and off-campus. Students can enroll in these plans to access healthcare services at participating providers.

