

Adopting an “Opt-Out” Approach to Chlamydia Screening

What is opt-out testing?

“Opt-out” testing is similar to universal screening. Providers set a practice protocol to screen all sexually active women 24 years old and younger and sexually active women 25 and older who are at an increased risk for chlamydia and gonorrhea. Patients are able to request an exception to the protocol and not be tested.

Why is opt-out different from what I am currently doing?

We find that many providers believe that their patients are already “opting-out” of screening for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Research shows that slight differences in the conversation may change the acceptance rate because women feel more comfortable.



What does the conversation look like?

“I would like to talk about your sexual health which can be a sensitive subject, but it is very important. Have you been sexually active in the past year?”

If yes, introduce the practice protocol to the patient.

“Our practice screens all women 24 years old and younger and other sexually active women for sexually transmitted infections. Many STIs do not produce symptoms, and if left untreated can have life-changing impacts to your health, including your ability to have children. Since you are sexually active, we will be screening you for chlamydia and gonorrhea today as well. If we receive any positive test results, my nurse will give you a call and we can discuss further.”

“Do you have any additional questions before we do your exam?”