

STIs series

LGV

What is LGV?

- LGV stands for lymphogranuloma venereum. It is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by the same bacteria that causes chlamydia.
- It can affect the urinary tract, penis*, vagina* and sometimes the throat or rectum (inside the butt).

How do you get LGV?

- LGV is found in certain bodily fluids of someone who has LGV: semen (cum), pre-cum, vaginal fluid, and anal fluid.
- You can get LGV from having unprotected vaginal, oral or anal sex with someone who already has it.
- You can get LGV if you share sex toys with someone who already has it and you don't disinfect the toys or put a new condom on them each time a new person uses the toys.

How do you know if you have LGV?

- The only way to know you have LGV is to get tested.
- Many people do not have any symptoms and may not know they have it. You can pass on LGV even if you don't have any symptoms.
- There are 3 stages of an LGV infection. Symptoms can vary depending on which stage the infection is at.

Stages of LGV

Stage one:

- 3 days to one month after you get LGV
- Small, painless sore where the infection is (vagina, penis, mouth, butt)
- You may not get a sore or not notice if you do
- Painful urination (peeing)

**We know that these aren't the words everyone uses for their bodies (eg. trans folks), and support you using the language that feels best for you.*

for youth ages 13-29
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Stage two:

- 2-6 weeks after you get LGV
- Flu-like symptoms, fever, chills, muscle and joint pain, and swollen glands
- Pain, swelling and discharge from the area that is infected (eg. anus, penis, vagina or throat)

Stage three:

- If left untreated, LGV will progress to this stage after about 1 year of having it
- It is more common in people with cervixes** than people with testicles**
- During stage 3, LGV may cause swelling of the genitals or rectal (butt) problems like strictures (narrowing). These may need surgery to correct

Remember: *The most common symptom of LGV is no symptoms at all.*

How can you get tested for LGV?

- A blood test is used to test for LGV, along with a swab of the affected area (penis, vagina, rectum, or throat). A swab is like a long q-tip. Because LGV can be difficult to diagnose, both the blood test and the swab need to be done.
- If you want to be tested for LGV, ask specifically for an LGV test. Do not assume you will be tested for LGV, even if you asked to be tested “for everything” or “every STI”.

What if you test positive for LGV?

- LGV can be treated and cured with antibiotics.
- Your sexual partners should also get tested and treated. If they don't, they can give LGV to you again.
- It is important to have a follow-up test after you have finished all your medication. Talk to your clinician about being re-tested.
- To lower the risk of giving LGV to your sexual partners, wait for 7 days after you've taken the medication to have sex again.
- It is important to treat LGV. If left untreated, LGV can lead to serious health problems such as swelling of the legs, penis, testicles (balls) and uterine tubes. It can also cause chronic scarring, including scarring of the labia (vaginal lips) and infertility (the inability to get pregnant or get someone else pregnant).
- LGV is a reportable infection. This means that if you test positive for LGV, you may be called by a public health nurse to get contact information for current and past sexual partners so that those people may be encouraged to get tested. Your name is not disclosed when a sexual partner is contacted.

**** People with cervixes are usually designated female at birth while people with testicles are usually designated male at birth. People with testicles don't always identify as male and people with cervixes don't always identify as female.**

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- You can also contact current and past sexual partners yourself. If you wish to do so anonymously, you can use an email program called www.inspot.org.

How can you lower your risk of getting LGV and/or passing it on to your partner(s)?

- Make informed decisions. Talk to your partner(s) about STIs and the use of safer sex tools.
- Use condoms on penises or dildos for vaginal or anal sex, use latex gloves for finger play and fisting, and use condoms/dams for oral sex to lower your chances of getting or transmitting LGV.
- If you are sharing sex toys, be sure to disinfect them or put a new condom on them when a new person uses the toys.
- Get tested for STIs when you or your partner has a new sexual partner. Or, if you have new partners often, get tested every 3-6 months. If you ever have symptoms of an STI, get tested.
- If you test positive for LGV, follow your clinician's instructions for treatment and follow-up.

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