Your patients’ sexual history is an important part of their overall health and wellness. Taking a sexual history will help guide the physical exam, screening of all exposed sites for sexually transmitted infections (STI) and establish your patients’ STI/HIV risk.

Take a sexual history from all patients

The 5P’s of Sexual Health

**Partners**
Number and gender of partners over a given time

**Practices**
Types of sexual practices – oral, vaginal, anal

**Protection from STIs**
Use of condoms and other methods

**Past History of STIs**
Establish risk of repeat infections, HIV status and hepatitis risk

**Prevention of Pregnancy**
Desire of pregnancy and use of prevention methods

Adapted from *A Guide to Taking a Sexual History*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/SexualHistory.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/SexualHistory.pdf)
“It is important we discuss your sexual practices. I speak with all my patients about many different aspects of their lives.”

The 5P’s: Sample Questions

**Partners**
- In the past 12 months, how many sexual partners have you had? Men? Women? Both? Transgender?

**Practices**
- In the past 12 months, have you had vaginal sex? Oral sex? Anal sex?
- *For men who have sex with men*—Are you the receptive partner (“the bottom”)?

**Protection from STIs**
- How do you keep yourself from getting infected?
- Do you use condoms consistently? If not, in which situations are you more likely to use a condom?

**Past History of STIs**
- Have you even been diagnosed with an STI, such as HIV, herpes, gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis, HPV or trichomoniasis? When?
- Have you had any recurring symptoms or diagnosis?
- When was your last HIV test?

**Pregnancy**
- Are you trying to conceive or father a child? Do you want to avoid pregnancy?
- Are you using contraception or practicing any form of birth control?
- Do you need any information on birth control or a referral?

**To assess HIV and Hepatitis risk, ask:**
- Have you or any of your partners been diagnosed HIV or hepatitis C?
- Have you or any of your partners injected drugs?

**Best practices for obtaining a sexual history**

*Ensure a safe patient environment*
*Assure confidentiality*
*Be non-judgmental*
*Be sensitive and matter-of-fact*
*Avoid assumptions*

Take a sexual history from all patients