

Are you over 45? Do you have a new sexual partner? Are you recently back on the dating scene?

Drop in or make an appointment to discuss keeping healthy and safe.

THE FACTS

Rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among those over 45 are rising.

Since 2012 there has been a steady rise in the number of chlamydia diagnoses in those over 45.¹

In 2004 only one in fourteen new HIV diagnoses were in heterosexuals over 50 years of age; by 2013 this had risen to one in five.²

Our culture and our assumptions

Studies have shown that most of us associate sexually transmitted infections with being young and carefree. Many of us think of condoms as something we use only to prevent pregnancy. In later life, when we don't need to use them for contraception, it can be hard to talk about using them with new partners.

It is reassuring to date an older partner, who is caring, and has had few previous partners. It is then easy to believe we are not at risk of sexually transmitted infections.

When starting a new relationship there are often a lot of distracting and complex emotions and thoughts. Feelings of excitement, youthfulness, lack of vulnerability and enjoyment of risk taking are reasonable emotions to have. It is also common to feel low self-esteem with our older body, lack of self-confidence, concerns about sexual performance and guilt.² For many, adapting to the new dating culture is also a challenge.

Our Advice

Sex and sexually transmitted infections are not just for young people - you are still at risk whatever your age! Fertility fades out gradually and you may still need contraception.

Stay safe by using condoms with new partners and attending for a STI screen. Our team at SHAC East and SHAC Central will be happy to give you advice and will welcome your questions.

References

1. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/534555/2015_Table_2_New_STI_diagnoses___rates_by_gender___sexual_risk___age_group___2011-2015.pdf
2. Psychosocial factors influencing risk-taking in middle age for STIs J. Dalrymple, J. Booth, P. Flowers, K.Lorimer STIdoi:10.1136/sextans-2016-052588