

# Introduction

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Contact tracing is an important part of the clinical management of patients diagnosed with Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs). For most STIs and blood-borne infections, primary care providers, such as general practitioners (GPs), are best placed to assist patients in undertaking contact tracing. GPs or primary care providers have a legal responsibility to ensure contact tracing takes place in most states and territories. Some states and territories may require authorisation to undertake certain contact tracing activities, depending on local legislation. Check the legal requirements in your own jurisdiction as differences may apply.

Contact tracing not only has public health benefits but also has health benefits for the individual with the infection and their partners. Contact tracing can prevent reinfection of the index patient, which is particularly important for infections like chlamydia where reinfection can increase the risk of reproductive complications following cervical infection.

Contact tracing can identify people who are infected and are either symptomatic or asymptomatic but are unaware of their infectious status and enable timely medical management. In most cases, contact tracing can be undertaken by the index patient (patient referral), with health care provider assistance as an alternative option (provider referral). This needn't be a complex or time-consuming exercise – generally, it involves a discussion between the health care provider and the patient.

In certain circumstances where infection is not immediately attributable to sexual or injecting drug use transmission. Consultation with specialist services for advice or assistance with detailed risk assessment and contact tracing is strongly recommended. In cases where health care providers do not feel adequately equipped to assist index patients or to trace contacts, referral to, or consultation with, a specialist centre should also be considered. See the [Register of Public Sexual Health Clinics in Australia and New Zealand](#) for a list of specialist services.

Page last updated September 2022



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