



# Contact Tracing / Partner Notification

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Legal Considerations and Curly Cases  
Seminar

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## Definition of Contact Tracing:

Contact Tracing/ Partner Notification is the process of contacting the sexual partner/s of a person diagnosed with an STI or HIV and advising them that they have been exposed.

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## Contact Tracing Objectives

### PUBLIC HEALTH

- Interrupt the transmission of infection
- Identify populations at particular risk
- Reduce community incidence of infection

### INDIVIDUAL

- Identify people who may benefit from testing and treatment
  - Provide individual counselling
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## Aims of Contact Tracing

- Identify previously unrecognized or asymptomatic cases of infection
  - Prevent the development of serious complications
  - Improve patient management by preventing re-infection of the index case.
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## Case Study

- John is a 35 year old married man and father of two
  - He has just been diagnosed with HIV
  - John has sex with other men – his wife does not know about this
  - Is John legally obliged to tell his wife (contact trace) of his diagnosis?
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## Strategies for Contact Tracing

### *Patient Referral*

- Used mostly (but not only) for Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea in Victoria

**Benefit** – Cheap, usually timely, can get many partners quickly.

**Disadvantage** – Relies on a highly motivated index client, difficult to measure outcomes.

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## Strategies for Contact Tracing

### *Provider referral*

- Used mostly for HIV, Infectious Syphilis and complex cases of other STIs

**Benefit**– confidentiality, it gets done, outcomes easily measured.

**Disadvantage** – more expensive, time consuming, some partners inaccessible to some workers.

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## Strategies for Contact Tracing

### ***Conditional Referral***

- Used for all STIs, particularly HIV in MSM

**Benefit** – cheaper than provider referral, can measure outcomes, client still maintains some control

**Disadvantage** – more expensive than patient referral, not all partners may be contacted.

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## Contact tracing methods

- In person – either the client does it themselves or done by a health professional
- Telephone – as above
- Letter – hand delivered, mailed
- Email
  - consider confidentiality of recipient
  - can be done anonymously if required
- SMS
  - Can be useful to make contact with the partner but not to pass on risk of infection information
  - Can be done anonymously also

<http://www.letthemknow.org.au/email.html>

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## Golden rules of Contact tracing

- Relies on the co-operation of the index - build a rapport using a non-judgmental approach.
  - Do NOT make assumptions about sexual practices – encourage patient to tell the story
  - Do not encourage contact tracing if there is a risk of any form of violence
  - Always maintain the confidentiality of the index case when using provider referral.
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## Important internet resources

### **Melbourne Sexual Health Centre**

<http://www.mshc.org.au/>

### **Contact Tracing internet assistance**

<http://www.letthemknow.org.au/email.html>

### **Contact Tracing internet assistance (Men who have Sex with Men)**

[www.thedramadownunder.info](http://www.thedramadownunder.info)

### **Rural STI testing website**

<http://www.testme.org.au/>

### **Risk assessment tool for patients**

<http://www.checkyourrisk.org.au/>

### **Assistance for GPs/health professionals in diagnosing, testing and treating STIs**

<http://www.mshc.org.au/Default.aspx?alias=www.mshc.org.au/gpassist>

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## MSHC Physician assistance line for health professionals

**1800 009 903**

9am – 12.30pm and 1.30pm – 5pm

Monday to Friday

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Questions?

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