

COACHING PATIENTS ABOUT TALKING WITH THEIR PARTNER(S)

Patients may experience anger, embarrassment, fear, and discomfort upon learning that they have an STD. This may be exacerbated when they realize they need to disclose this information to partners and see that they receive treatment. To help patients better understand the importance of partner treatment, providers can discuss the following:

- If the partner does not receive treatment and they have sex again, there is a great likelihood that the patient will become reinfected.
- Reinfection can lead to serious health complications for the patient.
- Partners who are unaware of their infection and who do not get treated, can develop serious health complications.
- Partners who are not treated, can spread the infection to others.

Providers can coach their patients on the most successful ways to initiate this difficult conversation. Whenever possible, offer patients the opportunity to talk through how to best approach their partners before leaving the exam room when the option of EPT has been decided.

There are additional key messages that should be conveyed to patients and their partner(s) when EPT is prescribed:

- Partners should read the informational material very carefully before taking the medication.
- Partners who have allergies to any antibiotics or who have serious health problems should see a healthcare provider right away and should not take the medications.
- Partners should seek a complete STD evaluation as soon as they can, whether or not they have taken the medicine.
- Partners who have symptoms of a more serious infection (e.g., pelvic pain in women, testicular pain in men, or fever in women or men) should not take the medications and should seek clinical care right away.
- Patients and their partners should refrain from having sex for 7 days after treatment and until 7 days after all partners have been treated, in order to decrease the risk of recurrent infection. If they do have sex before the end of the 7th day, they should be advised to see a health care provider.
- Partners should be advised to seek clinical services for re-testing three months after treatment.