

Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity

SOGI Screening: What You Need to Know

Early detection and prevention of disease are paramount to a healthy life. Speaking to your provider about your sex assigned at birth, sexual identity and sexual behaviors is the first step in tailoring your unique healthcare needs and allows providers to recommend the safest and best care for you.

WHY DOES THIS INFORMATION MATTER IN HEALTHCARE?

- Screening recommendations: screenings are recommended based on sex assigned at birth
- Lab ranges: 'normal' lab values for certain tests can vary based on the patient's biological sex
- Medication dosing: medication dosages can sometimes need to be adjusted based on biological sex due to differences in metabolism and body composition

CANCER

It's important to note that most cancers are caused by a combination of risk factors. Reducing modifiable risk factors can significantly lower the risk of developing cancer.

Lifestyle (modifiable) Factors:

- Smoking
- Alcohol consumption
- Physical inactivity
- Unhealthy diet
- Sun exposure
- Obesity
- Certain infections (e.g. HPV, hepatitis B and C)
- Age (risk increases with age)
- Hormonal imbalances

Genetic Factors:

- Family history of cancer
- Inherited genetic mutations

HEART HEALTH

According to the American Heart Association, smoking, alcohol use, lower physical activity levels, obesity, sleep issues, and chronic stress play a role in higher rates of high blood pressure and heart disease. Cardiovascular diseases including strokes and blood clots due to side effects of hormones such as estrogen and testosterone can also be a concern. This is why it is important not only to be frequently monitored but also to ensure medication is coming from a knowledgeable provider.

DIABETES

Obesity is a risk factor that increases the chance of developing diabetes. When unmanaged, diabetes can be life-threatening and can cause serious complications.

PHYSICAL SCREENINGS

Regular screenings to prevent, detect, and control risk factors for these and other medical conditions are recommended for all LGBTQIA+ patients. Screenings may include:

- Blood pressure and heart rate screening
- Height and weight checks for body mass index
- Blood tests for cholesterol, triglyceride, and glucose levels
- Urine tests for glucose and protein levels, bacteria, blood cells, and more
- STI screenings
- Medication and hormone treatment monitoring
- Immunizations
- Mammograms
- Bone density testing
- Gynecological and anal exams
- Lung, prostate, testicular, and colon cancer screenings
- Exercise and nutrition counseling

MENTAL WELL-BEING

Mental health screenings are important for your overall well-being, too, especially if you experience depression, anxiety, substance abuse, or other mental health issues. Increased stress from being subjected to violence, harassment, discrimination, or struggling with sexuality issues can factor into your mental well-being, and your care team can help you get the resources you need to cope.

Trust is paramount to the patient-healthcare professional connection. At Valley Medical Center, compassion and respect are core values practiced at every location. Speak with your provider about any concerns and screening that is best for you. Be open with your provider about your sexual orientation, histories, gender identity, past gender-affirming treatments, and any specific accommodations that you know you need.