

# Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men living in Ontario would welcome online STBBI testing services like GetCheckedOnline.

Online sexually transmitted and blood-borne infection (STBBI) testing addresses some of the testing barriers gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (GBM) living in Ontario experience. If services like GetCheckedOnline (GCO), which is available in British Columbia, existed in Ontario, this could lead to more GBM getting tested. Over time, this may reduce the burden of STBBIs in this population.

## Why the study is important

GBM living in Ontario experience barriers when testing in person for STBBIs. Online STBBI testing services may help lessen some of the barriers.

GCO is a public-funded service in British Columbia that offers free and comprehensive STBBI testing without clients seeing a healthcare provider. We wanted to know how likely GBM living in Ontario would be to use an online STBBI testing service like GCO. We were also interested in learning:

- What barriers delay GBM from getting tested for STBBIs in person?
- What benefits and drawbacks do GBM see in using a service like GCO?
- What factors predict if GBM are likely to use such a service?



## What we did

We used Ontario data from the 2019 Sex Now Survey, a community-based national, bilingual, online survey of GBM 15 years and older living in Canada.

We looked at the percentage of GBM who:

- Were likely to use an online testing service,
- Experience barriers that delayed them getting tested for STBBIs,
- Endorse specific benefits and drawbacks of a service like GCO.

We also developed statistical models to predict how likely certain subgroups of GBM were to use a service like GCO.

## What we found

Of the total 1369 participants, 80% said they were likely to use online STBBI testing. 59% had delayed testing, most commonly due to being too busy and inconvenient clinic hours. Saving time (67%) and convenience (65%) were the two most selected benefits of using an online testing service. Privacy of one's information was the most selected drawback of using an online testing service (38%). Participants were more likely to use an online testing service if they were:

- Younger in age (1% more likely),
- Not taking HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) (11% more likely),
- Engaging in more behaviours associated with likelihood of STBBI transmission (3% more likely),
- Not white and born outside of Canada (13% more likely).

Two-Spirit individuals were 39% less likely to use online testing when compared to non-Two-Spirit Indigenous individuals. However, when considering it together with other factors, Two-Spirit identity was not a predictor for GBM being likely to use online STBBI testing.

Dulai, J., Gilbert, M., Lachowsky, N.J., Card, K.G., Klassen, B., Dame, J., Burchell, A.N., Worthington, C., Ablona, A., Anand, P., Blaque, E., Ryu, H., Stewart, M., Brennan, D.J., & Grace, D. (2023). [Acceptability of an existing online sexually transmitted and blood-borne infection testing model among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men in Ontario, Canada](#). *Digital Health*, 9, 1-16.

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