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Press Release

Are you gambling with your sexual health?

Channel 4's Embarrassing Bodies is coming to Middlesbrough to host a singles casino night with a difference.

The exclusive event, featuring star of the show Dr Christian, aims to put the spotlight on sexual health by getting across safe sex messages in a fun and friendly way.

Adults from across Teesside are invited to take part in the show at Middlesbrough Town Hall on Saturday November 28 which will involve gambling with condoms instead of chips and a talk by Dr Christian exploring the shocking excuses people come up with for not using appropriate protection.

But tickets are only being made available to people who undergo a full sexual health MOT.

In order to cope with the increased demand, NHS Tees nurses are setting up special clinics in The Mall, Middlesbrough, over the next two weeks to offer over 18s a full sexual health check up and hand out tickets to the show.

Free sexual health MOTs will be available at The Endeavour Practice in the Health Centre in The Mall, Middlesbrough, on Tuesday November 10 from 9am to 5pm and at NHS Middlesbrough's Life Store in The Mall on Thursday November 12, Saturday November 14 and Thursday November 19 from 11am to 5pm.

The first 300 people to have the sexual health MOT will be presented with tickets to the Embarrassing Bodies Singles Casino Night which will be filmed by Channel 4 for an episode of the show due to be screened in the spring.

Dr Christian said: "I want to encourage people who are sexually active or embarking on a new relationship to get themselves tested for STDs. I want it to be as normal as having a regular dental check up or cervical screening as there should be nothing embarrassing about getting a STI test - if anything it shows you are taking responsibility for your sexual health.

"Condoms have a terrible image problem and it's difficult promoting the use of them. Condoms these days are so much better than they used to be, so at this event we'll be promoting their use,

Issued by the Communications and Marketing Team for the four Primary Care Trusts on Teesside.

For information, photographs and interviews, please contact **Marie Levy**, Press Officer on **01642 352623** or by e-mail: marie.levy@middlesbroughpct.nhs.uk

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that it can be sexy to use one and most importantly that it's not necessary to gamble with your sexual health. We want people to enjoy a healthy sex life not put their health in danger.

"As a sexual health specialist I see the dangers unprotected sex can cause for patients but what I like about the idea of getting a free STI check in return for a ticket to the Embarrassing Bodies event at the Town Hall is that it's getting the safe sex message across to as many people as possible in a way which is fun not scary.

"The Embarrassing Bodies Singles Casino event at the Town Hall promises to be a real fun evening and anyone who's single, just started dating or even just wants to become better informed about safe sex should take this great opportunity to get a free sexual health screen in order to get their ticket."

Elaine Jenkinson, Sexual Health Lead for NHS Tees said: "Your responsibility for your sexual health is really important and one that can't be ignored.

"Taking chances with your sexual health can be a bit of a lottery – no one knows what the consequences will be. It could result in an STI or an unwanted pregnancy and could cause unnecessary worry and stress.

"The programme is about taking on board the serious message about keeping yourself safe by saying no to sex if it's not what you want, wearing condoms and having regular sexual health screening."

Councillor Brenda Thompson, Executive Member for Public Health and Sport at Middlesbrough Council, added: "Being aware of your sexual health and having it checked out is nothing to be embarrassed about.

"This event and TV programme will be fun. But it will also underline a very serious message for people to be aware of the risks of unprotected sex and not be afraid or embarrassed to use the excellent health services that are available in Middlesbrough for sexual health screening."

For more information visit the Life Store in The Mall, Middlesbrough.

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For more details or to arrange interviews, photos or case studies please contact Press and Public Relations Officer Marie Levy on 01642 352623.

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