

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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Increase in Syphilis cases in the Region

The Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) catchment area is seeing an increased number of infectious syphilis cases. Although case rates have been rising since 2018, there was a drastic increase in 2021, where rates rose by 107% since 2020.

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) spread through direct contact with a syphilis sore during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. To prevent syphilis, the health unit urges the use of condoms when engaging in sexual activity. Condoms are available for free at local NWHU offices.

Those who have had unprotected sex with new or multiple partners should seek confidential free syphilis testing from either NWHU or from their health care provider. “Syphilis is easily cured with antibiotics when treated early, but, delayed treatment can result in severe and irreversible damage,” says Dr. Kit Young Hoon, Medical Officer of Health at NWHU.

Getting tested during pregnancy is very important as syphilis can spread from a woman to fetus. “Being tested for syphilis during pregnancy can help prevent serious health risks to a woman and her unborn baby”, says Dr. Young Hoon. Pregnant women should speak with their health care provider about getting tested.

For more information on syphilis, visit:

- [What you need to know about syphilis - CATIE](#)
- [Syphilis – Public Health Agency of Canada](#)

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