

August 26, 2024

Public Health Alert – Increase in Gonorrhoea Rates

Situation

For the past few months, the rate of gonorrhoea infections in the Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) catchment area has seen a statistically significant increase. For the months of May through July 2024, the rate was 24.2 per 100,000 population per month, compared with 15.3 per 100,000 population per month during the same 3 months over the past 5 years. This is particularly impacting Kenora and Sioux Lookout Local Health Hubs.

Risk factors for gonorrhoea include:

- No condom used
- Sex with opposite sex
- Judgment impaired by alcohol or drugs
- Other STI/ repeat infections
- New contact in past 2 months, more than one sexual partner in past 6 months, anonymous sex

Actions requested

- Test for gonorrhoea in accordance with Canadian STI Guidelines
 - Specific foci include:
 - Sample all possibly infected tissue/ anatomic sites
 - Conduct test of cure at ALL positive anatomic sites for all cases (Updated guidance in 2023)
- Report cases to NWHU including how to connect with the patient, information about contacts and how to connect with contacts, to the greatest extent possible to avoid lost follow up, e.g. a patient's phone number may not be working by the patient may have another way of being contacted such as a message app
- Contact NWHU to access publicly funded medication for a patient or to have some pre-placed at your facility to facilitate early treatment
- Test concurrently for chlamydia, syphilis, and HIV in accordance with the HIV screening and testing guide
- Educate patients about prevention including the importance of condoms with all anatomical sites; condoms are available at no cost at NWHU; additionally, discuss risks related to impaired judgement when using alcohol or drugs and resulting lack of condom use

Contact

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