
Media Release



Syphilis rates increasing in the region

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The Timiskaming Health Unit (THU) is advising the public that syphilis rates are currently increasing in the region. Given the current trend, THU expects that there will be more cases over the next few months.

In addition, cases of congenital syphilis have been reported in northern Ontario. Congenital syphilis occurs when a baby is born with syphilis as a result of being infected in the womb or during birth. This often occurs when the birth parent was untreated or was unaware of their infection.

“If you are pregnant, it’s important to consult with your health care provider about testing. Anyone who is pregnant should be tested. This testing is critical to prevent spreading syphilis to the baby,” says Dr. Glenn Corneil, Acting Medical Officer of Health and CEO of THU.

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) spread through direct contact with a syphilis sore during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Early symptoms may include ulcers at the site of exposure which may appear up to three weeks after being exposed, followed by rashes on the palms and feet, fever, and other symptoms. For more information about syphilis and its symptoms, visit www.sexandu.ca/stis/syphilis/.

To prevent syphilis, THU urges the use of barriers, including condoms, during sexual activity. Condoms and other barriers are available for free at THU offices. Anyone who has had unprotected sex with new or multiple partners should seek confidential free syphilis testing either from THU or from their health care provider.

For more information, visit <https://www.timiskaminghu.com/431/sexually-transmitted-infections>.

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