



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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MDHHS encourages residents to get tested during STI Awareness Week

Cases of symptomatic, infectious syphilis increased 50% over last decade

LANSING, Mich. – As part of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) Awareness Week, April 12-18, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) reminds residents to advocate for their sexual health and get tested for STIs regularly. Syphilis is a key focus this year, and MDHHS is emphasizing the importance of awareness, early detection and timely treatment.

“Syphilis is preventable and treatable,” said Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, chief medical executive. “Regular testing, open conversations with partners and providers, and timely treatment are critical to protecting your health and preventing serious complications. Taking these steps is essential to reversing current trends and safeguarding the health of our communities.”

In Michigan, preliminary 2025 data show that rates of symptomatic and infectious syphilis have increased 50% over the past 10 years. If left untreated, syphilis can affect one’s organs and nervous system, and increase the risk of acquiring other STIs, including HIV. While most syphilis cases occur among gay and bisexual men, the proportion of syphilis cases among straight men and women has risen rapidly.

There also has been an increase in syphilis among pregnant women, leading to a rise in congenital syphilis. Congenital syphilis occurs when the infection passes to babies during pregnancy. If left untreated, this can lead to serious health complications for the baby, including death. There were 58 congenital syphilis cases reported in 2024, which was the highest total number of cases in Michigan in more than 30 years.

Syphilis testing and treatment are available at little to no cost through [local health departments](#) and other providers. MDHHS encourages residents to get tested for syphilis regularly if they are sexually active. To prevent cases of congenital syphilis, pregnant women should seek early prenatal care with recommended [syphilis screening](#) in the first and third trimesters to help ensure timely treatment and partner notification when diagnosed.

In addition, doxycycline post-exposure prophylaxis ([doxy PEP](https://www.michigan.gov/doxyPEP)) is an emerging prevention strategy that may reduce the chances of acquiring syphilis among some individuals when taken within 24 hours and no longer than 72 hours after a potential exposure. Doxy PEP should be considered in consultation with a health care provider as part of a comprehensive sexual health care approach. For more information visit [Michigan.gov/doxyPEP](https://www.michigan.gov/doxyPEP).

More information about syphilis testing, treatment, prevention resources and partner services are available by visiting the MDHHS [Stop Syphilis](https://www.michigan.gov/stop-syphilis) website. Information and resources on other STIs can be found at [Michigan.gov/HIVSTI](https://www.michigan.gov/HIVSTI).

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