

Wellness Articles

Attached are weekly health and wellness articles provided by Alberta Health Services. As a way to help all Albertans live a healthy life, we welcome and encourage weekly newspapers, community newsletters and other publications to reproduce this information free of charge. Credit to Alberta Health Services or the identified content provider would be appreciated.

If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

Proposed publication date: Oct. 18, 2021
Content provided by: Alberta Health Services

Symptoms or not: get protected, get tested for syphilis

- Alberta declared a syphilis outbreak in 2019, which has continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Over 2,500 cases of infectious syphilis were diagnosed in 2020.
- Syphilis continues to be on the rise in Alberta.
- Syphilis can be transmitted to babies when mothers are infected and not treated during pregnancy. Congenital syphilis is a severe and life-threatening illness, with up to 40 per cent of babies of infected mothers being stillborn.
- Syphilis can be treated but requires a special antibiotic provided by your healthcare provider.
- If left untreated, syphilis can have lasting effects on your health, your sexual partner's health and your infant's health (if pregnant).
- Symptoms or not: get protected, get tested.
- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are a risk to anyone who is sexually active.
- Even without a symptom, always see your doctor or sexual health service and get tested if you have a new or several sexual partners.
- AHS encourages everyone who is sexually active to take responsibility for having safer sex.
 - Limit your sexual partners, and know if your partner engages in risky sexual behaviours.
 - Use a condom during sex. Using a condom is the best way to protect yourself from STIs.
- STI testing is confidential and free to anyone in Alberta, and walk-in clinics are available throughout the province.
- Who should get tested:
 - Anyone experiencing STI-related symptoms.

- Anyone with a sexual partner who has an STI
 - Anyone with new, anonymous, or multiple sexual partners, should be screened every three to six months.
 - All pregnant persons should be tested in the first trimester and again at the time of delivery.
- How to get tested:
 - Call Health Link at 811, see your healthcare provider such as your family physician / nurse practitioner, visit a walk-in medical clinic, or contact an STI or sexual health clinic.
 - Alberta Health Services, in partnership with Alberta Health and community partners, have been working together to support initiatives to address ongoing syphilis transmission.
 - In addition, we encourage Albertans to assess and manage their personal risk and to take additional precautions that will serve their needs to support their health. This includes practicing safer sex.
 - For more information, visit ahs.ca/syphilis.