



## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **SAGINAW COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH RECOGNIZES STD AWARENESS MONTH**

April is Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Awareness Month, a time to get yourself tested for STDs and raise awareness of the importance of protection. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is dedicating all of the STD Awareness Month to syphilis prevention. According to the CDC, syphilis is now on the rise again and has reached a critical high: the current number and rate of cases is higher than it's been in more than 20 years. In 2015, there were close to 24,000 cases of syphilis reported in the U.S. - that was almost a 20% overall increase since 2014 alone.

The rise in syphilis infections makes syphilis a renewed health threat for many. Left untreated, syphilis can cause severe health problems affecting the brain, eyes, heart and other organs. Syphilis can also increase a person's risk for getting HIV. The good news is that syphilis is simple to cure with the right treatment.

The only way to avoid syphilis and other STDs is to not have vaginal, anal, or oral sex. However if you are sexually active, you can do the following things to lower your chances of getting syphilis:

- Be in a long-term, monogamous relationship with a partner who's tested negative for syphilis and other STDs.
- Use latex condoms every time you have sex.
- Talk openly and honestly with your healthcare provider and ask what tests may be right for you. If you test positive for syphilis, get treated right away and be sure your sexual partner is treated as well to reduce the risk of re-infection.

The Saginaw County Department of Public Health offers testing for syphilis and other STDs. Call (989) 758-3880 for an appointment or for information, or visit our website at [www.saginawpublichealth.org](http://www.saginawpublichealth.org). Be Wise. Be Well.

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