



**Northwestern
Health Unit**

www.nwhu.on.ca

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Medical Alert – Syphilis Update

The infectious syphilis outbreak in the Northwestern Health Unit catchment area is ongoing. The majority of cases continue to be in Kenora but cases have also been identified in other communities (see Epidemiological Summaries located [here](#)).

Please consider:

- Testing for syphilis and other sexually transmitted infections for those who are at-risk. Risk factors include:
 - Unprotected sex with casual or anonymous partners, multiple sexual partners, substance misuse, incarceration, homeless or unstable housing, those requesting STI testing, patients with a confirmed or suspected STI, men who have sex with men, or having a sexual partner with any of the above risk factors.
- Testing during pregnancy:
 - Universal screening of all pregnant women during the first trimester.
 - Screening test should be repeated at 28-32 weeks and again at delivery in women at high risk of acquiring syphilis. More frequent re-screening may be considered.
- Testing for syphilis in patients with compatible symptoms including a primary chancre, maculopapular rash involving the palms and soles, or other signs of syphilis
- Providing counselling to patients on the importance of condoms and dental dams; they are available from NWHU at no charge for distribution through your clinic.
- Treatment for sexually transmitted infections can be made available at no charge; please contact NWHU to arrange for free medication through your clinic.
- Completing NWHU forms for follow up on any case you test/identify.
- Notifying Northwestern Health Unit if you suspect a diagnosis of syphilis.

Resources for Health Care Providers:

Information and supports for health care providers and the most recent epidemiological report are available at the [NWHU - Syphilis](#) webpage.

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