

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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Lack of condom use contributing to high local STI rates

Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) advises that cases of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are high in the region. Local rates of many STIs, including chlamydia, syphilis, gonorrhoea, and HIV are much higher than the average rates in Ontario. Those aged 15 to 34 years and their partners are most likely to be exposed to an STI, however, cases have been seen across other age groups as well.

Data shows that risk factors for STIs include:

- No condom use
- More than one sexual partner in the last six months
- Impaired judgement due to alcohol or drug use

Condom use is the best method to prevent a sexually transmitted infection, and free condoms are available from all NWHU offices and various local partners. “Consistent use of condoms is very important to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections,” says Dr. Kit Young Hoon, Medical Officer of Health at NWHU. Additionally, NWHU can help support those who are sexually active or planning to be to get familiar and comfortable with using condoms and talking to a partner about safer sex.

Anyone who has had unprotected sex should get tested for an STI - testing is available from healthcare providers and at NWHU sexual health clinics. Early testing allows for prompt treatment, which reduces the risk of health complications and prevents spreading the STI to others. Some infections can also be transmitted through drug use, by sharing supplies. NWHU offers free drug use equipment to those who require them to prevent the spread of blood-borne infections.

For more information, contact your [local NWHU office](#).

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