



Jackson County Department of Public Health

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APRIL 9-15 IS SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STI) AWARENESS WEEK

The CDC estimates there are millions of new sexually transmitted infections (STI) in the United States each year. Anyone who is sexually active can get an STI, but some groups are more affected by STIs: Adolescents and Young Adults, Gay, Bisexual, & other Men who have Sex with Men, Pregnant Women and Infants, and Racial and Ethnic Minorities.

The good news is that STIs are preventable. Here are steps that you can take to keep yourself and your partner(s) healthy.

- Practice abstinence: the surest way to avoid STIs is to not have sex.
- Use condoms: Using a condom correctly every time you have sex can help you avoid STIs. Condoms lessen the risk of infections from all STIs. However, you can still get certain STIs, like herpes or HPV, from contact with your partner's skin even when using a condom.
- Have fewer partners: Agree to only have sex with one person who agrees to only have sex with you. Both of you should get tested to know for sure that neither of you has an STI.
- Get vaccinated: The most common STI can be prevented by a vaccine. The HPV vaccine is safe, effective and can help you avoid HPV-related health problems like genital warts and some cancers. The HPV vaccine is recommended for all boys and girl ages 11 to 12 and everyone through age 26 years, if not vaccinated already.
- Talk with your partner: Talk with your sex partner(s) about STIs and staying safe before having sex. While it may feel uncomfortable, protecting your health is your responsibility.
- Get tested: Many STIs don't have symptoms, but can still cause health problems. The only way to know for sure if you have an STI is to get tested.
- If you test positive: Many STIs are curable and all are treatable. If you or your partner are infected with an STD that can be cured you both need to start treatment immediately to avoid re-infection.

Jackson County Department of Public Health offers confidential counseling, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections. Parental permission is not required. Most services are free of charge. Condoms are available at the Health Department free of charge. Condoms can be obtained from the staff at the Check-In area or during regularly scheduled appointments. To schedule an appointment call 828-586-8994.

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