

## Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: [Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto: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>

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## STIs are a risk to anyone who is sexually active.

There is an outbreak of gonorrhoea and syphilis in Alberta. In 2018, over 5,000 Albertans were diagnosed with gonorrhoea, 2 ½ times more people than in 2014. Nearly 1,500 Albertans were diagnosed with syphilis in 2018, including infants. In addition, over 17,000 Albertans were diagnosed with chlamydia in 2018.

The majority of people have no symptoms when infected with a sexually transmitted infection (STI) but can infect their sexual partners regardless of symptoms. STIs such as syphilis can increase the risk of HIV acquisition. Getting tested is the only way to know if you have an STI. Testing may involve a blood and urine test or a swab of the throat, vagina, or rectum.

STIs are passed from one person to another through unprotected sexual contact. If left untreated, STIs can have serious effects on your health (for example infertility). Chlamydia, gonorrhoea, and syphilis can be treated with antibiotics. Both the patient and all sexual partners should be treated to prevent reinfection.

AHS encourages everyone who is sexually active to practice safer sex, and get tested if in a new relationship or symptomatic. All pregnant women should be tested in the first trimester and at delivery. Using condoms correctly and consistently can significantly reduce the risk of passing or getting STIs.

Anyone with symptoms of or concerns about an STI can call Health Link (811) or visit their family doctor. Check out [www.sexgerms.com](http://www.sexgerms.com), AHS's site for sexual health. On the website you will find information and where to get tested.