



City and County of San Francisco
Mark Farrell
Mayor

San Francisco Department of Public Health

Barbara A. Garcia, MPA
Director of Health

Celebrate Valentine's Day by Showing You Care: Know Your Status

Bay Area health officials urge precautions in light of STD increase
Share the love, but not the STDs!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAN FRANCISCO (February 13, 2018) -- This Valentine's Day, Bay Area health officials remind everyone who is sexually active to have a conversation with your primary care provider about sexual health and to be screened regularly for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

Across the country and in California, syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia have been increasing for the past five years. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), California has the highest rates among all states. Having an untreated STD can increase your risk of HIV infection, infertility problems, long-term pelvic or abdominal pain, and complications in pregnancy. When untreated, STDs also can be passed on to others.

In San Francisco, we do have some good news. Fewer people were diagnosed with HIV in 2016 than at any previous time since the disease was identified. That progress is thanks to people who are HIV-positive using treatment that prevents the spread, and people who are HIV-negative using PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) to resist infection. Both of these measures keep individuals healthy and prevent HIV transmission.

However, cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis in San Francisco increased from 11 to 26 percent in 2017 compared to 2016. Condoms lessen the risk of getting these diseases, and routine screening and prompt treatment can prevent complications and transmission to partners. The Health Department's San Francisco City Clinic has been helping people share the love, but not the STDs since 1911.

"No matter who you are, or what you're into, we want you to feel comfortable coming to SF City Clinic for your sexual health concerns," said Dr. Stephanie Cohen, Medical Director of



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City Clinic. “We recommend regular screening for STDs so you can get treated if you need it, and take charge of your health.”

STDs are preventable and treatable. These steps can help everyone reduce risk:

- Ensure correct and effective condom use for all sexual activity
- Get tested regularly
 - Sexually active women under 26 years old should be screened for gonorrhea and chlamydia annually.
 - Gay men and other men who have sex with men, trans women and trans men who have sex with men should be screened for gonorrhea, chlamydia and syphilis every three months
 - Talk to your provider if you have questions about whether you need screening for STDs
- Get vaccinated to prevent Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Human Papillomavirus (HPV), all of which can be transmitted through sex
- Have open and honest conversations about sexual health with partners
- It can be common to have an STD without experiencing any symptoms. If you are sexually active, talk to your provider about being tested for STDs, even if you feel fine.

For more information about STDs and sexual health, as well as free or low cost expert STD services in San Francisco, visit www.cityclinic.org. Or find a provider at <https://gettested.cdc.gov>.

For more information about STDs in California, visit <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/STD.aspx>.

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