



Weekly Alert June 13th, 2024

U.S. syphilis cases rising; awareness in Texas is high

Syphilis is serious, but highly preventable and treatable

According to CDC, syphilis cases in the US have surged **80% higher** since 2018. Congenital syphilis, which is passed from mother to fetus, is up 31% since 2018, with rates 10 times higher than they were in 2012. Over 4 in 10 Texas adults surveyed (43%) reported hearing about it in the last week.

Why the increase?

US syphilis cases have been **steadily rising** since 2000. Initially, the increase was among men having sex with men, but more recently it has been growing among heterosexual men and women, and those sharing needles during drug use. Cases are now as common among women as men.

Understanding syphilis

Syphilis is a bacterial disease most often transmitted during unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sex with an infected person. It can also be transmitted by sharing needles with an infected person during drug use. **Health effects** can be severe. Mild symptoms include small skin lesions around the genitals, rectum, or mouth. If untreated, syphilis can damage the heart, brain, and other organs. Untreated syphilis during pregnancy can be passed on to the baby and is often life-threatening for the baby.

Preventing, detecting, and treating syphilis

Using condoms or dental dams during sex greatly reduces the transmission of syphilis. Getting tested regularly for syphilis and other STIs (and asking current sex partners to be tested) will detect cases early so effective treatments can begin. Free or low-cost testing and treatment is available at many **Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas** locations or the **Texas Department of State Health Service STI testing** locations. Treatment of syphilis with antibiotics can be highly effective.

Help Texans find syphilis testing locations

Local organizations can share the resources below to help lower syphilis rates in Texas.

This week's report is based on responses from a panel of 553 adult residents of Texas (n=49), St. Louis, MO (n=143), Baltimore, MD (n=171), Omaha, NE (n=90), and Colorado (n=100) surveyed June 8-12, 2024. Explore these data and more at [iHeard Texas](#).

Shareable Resources

Click to download resources to share in your community.

Remember to include **#iHeardTexas** **#iHeardTX** when sharing on social media!

Syphilis on the rise!

Syphilis
iHeard Texas

Did you know syphilis cases are on the rise in the US?

Swipe to learn why, why it matters, and how to stop the spread

Sources: CDC, Medline Plus

Why are cases rising? iHeard Texas

- U.S. cases rose nearly 80% from 2018 to 2022.
- There are more new cases:
 - Among heterosexual men and women.
 - From sharing needles during drug use.

Syphilis is serious iHeard Texas

- Syphilis is a **treatable** bacterial infection.
- It spreads through **unprotected sex** with an infected person and **sharing needles** with an infected person during drug use.
- It can also be passed to infants during pregnancy; this is called **congenital syphilis**.
- **Testing is key.** There are effective treatments for syphilis when it is found.

Syphilis prevention iHeard Texas

- Use **condoms or dental dams** during sex
- Get **tested** for STIs regularly
- **Ask current partner(s)** to get tested
- If pregnant, **seek prenatal care**

Syphilis treatment iHeard Texas

Syphilis is treatable.

It's most treatable when caught early. Treatment during pregnancy can protect you and your child from life-threatening illness.

Suggested caption:

□ Syphilis cases are on the rise □ It's crucial to stay informed and get tested regularly. Syphilis can affect anyone, and early detection is key to effective treatment. Protect yourself and others. Get tested, stay informed, and share this info with your community!

#iHeardTexas #STIs #Syphilis #GetTested

Download here

Get Tested for STIs!



Syphilis
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Don't delay, get tested for STIs today!

Schedule your appointment:

- Search for a Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas Health Center location near you at www.plannedparenthood.org/greater-texas
- Visit www.dshs.texas.gov/hivstd/testing to find HIV and STD testing locations near you.

Suggested caption:

Syphilis is a treatable bacterial infection and spreads through unprotected sexual contact. Testing is key! Symptoms may not be noticeable but serious health problems can still occur without treatment.

#iHeardTexas #STIs #Syphilis #GetTested

Download here

Testing is smart!



Syphilis
iHeard Texas

Hey Nia, did you hear about syphilis spreading in Texas?

Yeah, it's kinda scary. I'm actually planning to get tested later this week.

Really? Are you nervous? Do you think you have it?

I don't think I have it, but **better safe than sorry**. It can happen to anyone. I want to be sure.

Suggested caption:

STI testing is a smart, responsible choice for anyone. Early detection keeps you and your partners safe. Let's break the stigma and talk openly. Get tested, stay informed, and take control of your health!

#iHeardTexas #STIs #Syphilis #GetTested

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Combined Resource

Click to download a printer-friendly PDF with all the information above!

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