

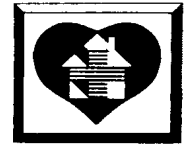
# Pike County Health Department

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HomeCare



Across Illinois

## PCHD News Release April is STI Awareness Month

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**Pike County, IL** – April is STI Awareness Month. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, nearly 20 million people in the United States get a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) each year. These infections affect women and men of all backgrounds and economic levels. But half of all new infections are among young people 15 to 24 years old. STIs are also called sexually transmitted diseases, or STDs. Some STIs can be cured by taking medication by mouth or getting a shot. For those STIs that cannot be cured, like herpes or HIV and AIDS, there are medicines to manage the symptoms.

Many STIs have only mild symptoms or no symptoms at all. When women have symptoms, they may be mistaken for something else, such as a [urinary tract infection](#) or [yeast infection](#). Get tested so that you can be treated for the correct infection.

Women often have more serious health problems from STIs than men:

- [Chlamydia](#) and [gonorrhea](#), left untreated, raise the risk of chronic pelvic pain and life-threatening [ectopic pregnancy](#).
- Chlamydia and gonorrhea also can cause infertility.
- Untreated syphilis in pregnant women results in infant death up to 40% of the time.<sup>3</sup>
- Women have a higher risk than men of getting an STI during unprotected vaginal sex. Unprotected anal sex puts women at even more risk for getting an STI than unprotected vaginal sex.

The best way to prevent an STI is to not have vaginal, oral, or anal sex. If you do have sex, lower your risk of getting an STI with the following steps:

- **Get vaccinated.** There are vaccines to protect against HPV and hepatitis B.
- **Use condoms.** Condoms are the best way to prevent STIs when you have sex.
- **Get tested.** Be sure you and your partner are tested for STIs. Talk to each other about the test results before you have sex.
- **Be monogamous.** Having sex with just one partner can lower your risk for STIs. After being tested for STIs, be faithful to each other. That means that you have sex only with each other and no one else.
- **Limit your number of sex partners.** Your risk of getting STIs goes up with the number of partners you have.
- **Do not douche.** [Douching](#) removes some of the normal bacteria in the vagina that protects you from infection. This may increase your risk of getting STIs.
- **Do not abuse alcohol or drugs.** Drinking too much alcohol or using drugs increases risky behavior and may put you at risk of sexual assault and possible exposure to STIs.

PCHD offers testing and treatment for chlamydia and gonorrhea for males and females Monday through Thursday from 8:30 – 5:00.

For more information, go to <https://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/sexually-transmitted-infections>.

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