



# NEWS RELEASE



## **For Immediate Release**

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### **(3/28/25) STI Awareness Month**

***(Increase Awareness, Decrease Stigma and Encourage Open Conversations)***

April is STI Awareness Month, a time to increase awareness of Sexually Transmitted Infections, decrease the stigma of STIs, and encourage open conversations with healthcare professionals to prevent life-long health issues.

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, STIs are some of the most commonly reported diseases in the United States, with an estimated 20 million new STI infections in the nation each year. Of these new infections, half are among young people age 15-24. While there are more than 20 types of STIs, some of the most common in Illinois are Chlamydia, Gonorrhea and Syphilis.

Many STIs can be easily diagnosed and treated. Treatment may include antibiotics or antivirals depending on the disease. It is common that many people will not have any symptoms when they are infected with an STI. This makes screening for such diseases important to prevent serious health problems from untreated infections.

While treatment is often the common course of action with sexually transmitted diseases, prevention plays the biggest role, and that includes vaccines. The CDC recommends vaccines for two common STIs: Hepatitis B (HBV) and Human Papillomavirus (HPV). Each vaccine is safe, effective, and recommended ways to prevent transmission of these diseases.

HPV vaccination is recommended for preteens, both male and female, ages 11 or 12 (or can start at age 9) and everyone through age 26, if not vaccinated already. This vaccine is best known in the prevention of several cancers including cervical, genital and throat.

You should also get vaccinated for hepatitis B if you were not vaccinated when you were younger. This vaccine prevents liver cancer and other liver related illnesses later in life.

Southern 7 Health Department offers testing for Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Syphilis and HIV at each of its Public Health Clinics. Vaccination for HBV and HPV are available by appointment by calling your local clinic or 618-634-2297. For more information on STI treatment and prevention visit [dph.illinois.gov](http://dph.illinois.gov) or download the Southern 7 app.

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