

STIs on the Rise: Protect Yourself!

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) like syphilis have been rapidly increasing in Dallas County since 2015, according to the 2022 Dallas County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA).

More than 3,000 cases of syphilis were reported in 2020, and more than 688 people were diagnosed with HIV in Dallas County the same year. Statewide, 685 cases of congenital (newborn) syphilis were reported in 2021, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services, the highest one-year total to date.

“STIs are increasing, and most people who have STIs do not have symptoms. The only way to know you have an STI is to be tested regularly,” said Helen King, MD, infectious disease specialist at Parkland Health and assistant professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases and Geographic Medicine at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center.

April is STI Awareness Month, but Parkland Health experts want to remind you that we offer testing, treatment and STI education year-round throughout our health system, including at our 16 Community Oriented Primary Care (COPC) health centers and through our Access to Care & Coverage Program, which brings Parkland to a neighborhood near you.

“Parkland is committed to reducing STIs in our community by empowering our community members to take control of their sexual wellness,” said Dr. King. “Getting tested, getting treated, and talking to your provider and partners about options to protect your sexual wellness can keep you safe and healthy.”

Having an STI can increase your chances of acquiring HIV, according to Dr. King who adds that anyone who is having sex should learn about their options to prevent STIs and HIV, including testing, condoms and PrEP, the medication that prevents HIV.

For information about sexual health, STIs, testing and treatment options, visit parklandhealth.org/sexual-health.