National Condom Week

The sexiest week of the year has arrived. In the midst of Valentine’s Day, Central Michigan District Health Department wants you to know how to protect yourself from sexually transmitted disease (STDs).

“Condoms and other latex barriers are the two primary means of preventing STDs other than abstinence,” states Lorrie Youngs, a CMDHD health educator and nurse. If you have an allergy to latex you can use synthetic condoms. Women can use female condoms and dental dams to help prevent contracting STDs such as chlamydia, genital herpes, gonorrhea, syphilis, hepatitis B and HIV. You should always assume that your partner is infected; it’s the safest thing because many people who have STDs have no symptoms.

Many are afraid to use barriers or to talk about STDs with their partners because they are too embarrassed. A person should mentally practice or anticipate what he or she would say or do in a certain situation to reduce awkward feelings and prevent the transmission of STDs.

Plan in advance to use protection, and be prepared for the unexpected. Please remember condoms go through rigorous testing and go above and beyond adequate safety measure testing. You must store condoms in a cool, dry place out of direct sunlight. Don’t keep condoms in temperatures above 85 degrees. Always note their expiration date before using and make sure the package is sealed without any rips or tears. If you use lubrication, which Youngs recommends, you must use only water-based lubricants with latex condoms. Avoid oil-based products like creams, petroleum jelly, body lotion, massage oil, or baby oil that can damage the latex.

We are trying to alert the public to the continued need for safe sex. The need for condom awareness is based on staggering health statistics including the fact that the United States has the world’s largest rates of curable STDs with 12 million new cases reported annually including over three million teenagers. The increase with STDs generates an enormous economic cost to society. It is estimated that economic costs of HIV and other STDs totaled approximately $34 billion in 1999.
Consistent and proper condom use is an effective method to prevent unwanted pregnancies, HIV transmission and infection of STDs. For more information on condoms, proper use of them and STDs call Central Michigan District Health Department at 989-773-5921 and we will be happy to assist you with any questions, concerns or testing.

Your Health Today article was provided to you by the staff at Central Michigan District Health Department. Central Michigan District Health Department serves residents in Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon Counties.