



PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

Central Michigan District Health Department
"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"

For more information, please call: (989) 773-5921 ext. 8409
2012 E. Preston Avenue, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48858, www.cmdhd.org

To: Local Newspaper
From: Lorrie Youngs
Subject: National Condom Week
Release Date: February 2009

National Condom Week

In the midst of Valentine's Day, the Central Michigan District Health Department would like you to know how to protect yourself from sexually transmitted diseases (STD's). Condoms (including female condoms and other latex barriers), and dental dams are the two primary means of preventing STD's other than abstinence. If you have an allergy to latex you can use synthetic condoms. It is necessary for the use of these devices to prevent contracting STD's such as: chlamydia, genital warts (HPV, human papilloma virus), genital herpes, gonorrhea, syphilis, hepatitis B and C, and HIV/AIDS. You should always assume that your partner may be infected; it's the safest thing because many people who have STD's have no symptoms. Twenty-five percent of HIV infected individuals do not know they are infected. Approximately 40 percent of men have no symptoms of chlamydia and 70 percent of females. In 2007, Michigan has reported 47,655 cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis. Within Central Michigan District Health Department's jurisdiction there has been a reported 376 cases of these STD's.

Some STD's can be treated and cured while others cannot. Common STD's that can be treated and cured are: Chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis and vaginal infections. These STD's are caused by bacteria. Some STD's that are not curable but are treatable are: genital herpes, genital warts, hepatitis B, and HIV/AIDS. These STD's are caused by viruses.



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STD's left untreated can be painful, make you very sick, and cause death. Some STD's that

go untreated for a long period of time can make male and females infertile. STD's can also cause birth defects or health problems in newborns.

Common signs or symptoms of some STD's may be unusual vaginal or penile discharge, unusual odor, any type of bump, lump, sore, rash, itching, swelling of lymph nodes, painful urination, pain or burning with intercourse, or lower abdominal pain. Testing is the only way to be sure that you don't have an STD.

Many are afraid to use barriers (condoms) or to talk about STD's with their partners because they are too embarrassed. A person should mentally practice or anticipate what he or she would say or do in certain situations, to reduce awkward feelings and to prevent the transmission of STD's.

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 and 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. If you use lubrication, which Lorrie Youngs, a CMDHD Health Educator 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 as these will damage the latex and often cause them to break.

Central Michigan District Health Department is alerting 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 STD's. The Center for Disease



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Control estimates that 19 million new infections occur each year, almost half of them among young

people ages 15 to 24. Despite the fact that STD's are extremely widespread and add an estimated \$13 billion dollars to the nation's healthcare cost each year, most people in the United States remain unaware of the risk and consequences of STD's.

Consistent and proper condom use is an effective method to prevent unwanted pregnancies, HIV/AIDS transmissions, and STD infections. For more information on condoms, the proper use of condoms, and/or STD's, call the Central Michigan District Health Department at 989-773-5921 ext. 8409 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 the residents in Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon Counties.

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