



Paul A. Pettit, MSL, CPH  
Public Health Director

**GENESEE COUNTY  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**  
3837 West Main Street Rd.  
Batavia, NY 14020  
(585) 344-2580 x5555

**ORLEANS COUNTY  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**  
14016 State Route 31, Suite 101  
Albion, NY 14411  
(585) 589-3278

### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Kaitlin Pettine, MPH, MCHES®

Director of Health Promotion/Public Information Officer

[Kaitlin.Pettine@co.genesee.ny.us](mailto:Kaitlin.Pettine@co.genesee.ny.us)

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### **RELEASE DATE:**

4/12/2024

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### Raising Awareness on Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

April 14-20, 2024 is STI Awareness Week. This provides an opportunity to raise awareness about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and how they impact our lives. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), sexually transmitted infections, commonly referred to as sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), are very common. STIs spread through anal, oral, and vaginal sex, and are caused by a virus, bacteria, fungus, or parasite. Sometimes, STIs only create minor symptoms, or they don't cause any symptoms at all. As a result, it is easy to get infected without realizing it. For this reason, if you are having sex, it is important that you get tested for STIs.

Locally, according to the New York State Communicable Disease Electronic Surveillance System (CDESS), in 2023, Genesee County had an increased number of chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis cases, compared to 2022 and Orleans County experienced an increase in gonorrhea during this same time period.

A variety of symptoms, including none at all, may occur with STIs. As a result, STIs can be spread unknowingly and this is why it is important to get tested. Delayed treatment can cause serious health effects. **STI symptoms could be:**

- Sores or pimples in the oral or rectal cavity, as well as on the genitalia
- Painful urination
- Unusual or smelly discharge
- Unusual bleeding
- Discomfort during intercourse
- Aches in the lower abdomen
- High temperature
- Rash on the hands, feet, or trunk

Taking the time to learn about STIs, safe-sex practices, and how to make educated decisions is important in prevention. **Here are some ways to prevent STIs:**

- The best defense against STI infection is to avoid all forms of sex (oral, vaginal, and anal).
- Talk to your healthcare provider about getting vaccinated against Hepatitis B and HPV. Receiving both vaccines can prevent several kinds of cancer. HPV is the most common STI in the country, effecting over 79 million people.
- Limit sexual partners. The more sexual partners a person has the more at risk of getting an STI.
- Discuss your partner(s)' STI status.
- Use condoms and or other forms of protection.

“As indicated or needed, make sure you routinely test for STI’s,” stated Brenden Bedard, Director of Community Health Services for the Genesee and Orleans County Health Departments (GO Health). “Untreated STIs can have effects such as infection, miscarriage, infertility, and an increased risk of cancer. By engaging in preventative measures, you are protecting yourself and your sexual partners.”

Learn how to prevent STIs for both you and your partner(s). Get help today.

*If you are interested in STI testing, or want more information:*

- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [Sexually Transmitted Diseases - Information from CDC](#).
- Talk with your healthcare provider about testing and how to further prevent STIs.
- If diagnosed with an STI, do not have sex until you and your partner(s) have completed treatment, otherwise reinfection will occur.
- If diagnosed with chlamydia, gonorrhea or trichomoniasis, talk to your provider about Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT). EPT gives providers the option to treat your sexual partners without requiring an examination.

For more information about GO Health programs and services, visit [GOHealthNY.org](http://GOHealthNY.org) or contact your local health department at

- Genesee County: 585-344-2580 ext. 5555
- Orleans County: 585-589-3278

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