

NEWS RELEASE

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Increasing Reports of Anonymous Sexual Partners among Those Diagnosed with STDs

BISMARCK, N.D. – State health officials are advising individuals that engage in risky sexual behaviors, such as sex with an anonymous partner, to seek evaluation for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) has received increased reports of anonymous sex among those diagnosed with STDs. Twenty to 58 percent of STD cases in 2017 reported having sex with an anonymous partner. To reduce the spread of STDs, the NDDoH offers partner services and notifies contacts of their exposure. However, many individuals with an STD are unable to provide contact information for their past sexual partners.

People at risk for STDs should see their health care provider or can access care from several clinics across the state that offer reduced fee STD testing. STD testing should include screening for chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis and HIV. Individuals at risk for STDs, should have STD testing every three to six months.

“Infected individuals and all of their sexual partners need to be treated immediately at the time of diagnosis to prevent the spread of infection to others,” said Shari Renton, STD surveillance coordinator.

Individuals at risk, including those with anonymous sex partners, should discuss HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (HIV PrEP) with a healthcare provider to prevent HIV infection. The most effective way to reduce the spread of STDs is to abstain from sexual activity or be in a long-term, mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who is known to be uninfected. Condoms, when used correctly, can reduce the spread of STDs.

“Limiting the number of sexual partners an individual reduces the risk of becoming infected with an STD,” said Renton.

STDs and HIV left untreated can lead to health complications which include compromised immune systems, fetal deaths, birth defects, infant eye infections and pneumonia, infertility, neurological problems, arthritis, and other problems.

For questions or more information, contact the NDDoH STD/HIV program at 701.328.2378 or 800.472.2180.

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