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NEWSROOM

PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST

MEETINGS AND AGENDAS

E-NEWSLETTER

EVENT CALENDAR

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For a healthier tomorrow, take steps to prevent Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) today

Throughout April, designated as National Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) awareness month, the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County urges residents of all ages to reduce their risk for these diseases by getting tested for chlamydia, herpes, gonorrhea, syphilis, human papillomavirus (HPV), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), AIDS and others.

Testing for STDs is available by appointment at Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (FDOH-Sarasota) locations: 2200 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota; and the North Port Health Center, 6950 Outreach Way, North Port.

[STD testing](#) for chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis and HIV also is available on a walk-in basis at the downtown Sarasota location in Room 1106. Hours for walk-in STD testing are 1-4 p.m. Mondays, 8:30-11:30 a.m. Wednesdays, and 1-5 p.m. Thursdays. There is no charge for testing and teens are welcome. A free gift will be provided to those who are tested during April.

The Clearview® Rapid HIV Test, which involves a finger poke to get a small blood sample, provides preliminary test results in about 15 minutes. Follow-up HIV testing is needed to confirm HIV status. Urine testing is available for detecting gonorrhea and chlamydia infection. Syphilis testing is done through a blood draw.

“These efforts to make STD testing easier are in response to the silent epidemic of gonorrhea, chlamydia and other STDs, especially among our youth,” said Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County Medical Executive Director William Heymann, M.D.

According to the American Social Health Association, as many as one in two sexually active young people will contract an STD by age 25 and won't know it.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says that people under age 25 represent half of the estimated 19 million STDs occurring in the United States each year. The CDC estimates that one in 15 sexually active females, ages 14-19 years has chlamydia. According to disease surveillance reports, STDs are increasing in Florida. Chlamydia is the most commonly reported STD in Sarasota County and is more likely to infect young people. According to the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County, one in about 60 teenagers 15 – 19 years old was diagnosed with chlamydia in the county during 2012. This compares with one in 386 persons across all other age groups during the same time period.

“People may not have symptoms, but may be infected and be able to spread the diseases,” says Dr. Heymann. “When left untreated, STDs can lead to an increased risk of HIV infection, infertility and cancer.”

CDC health officials say that people who have had a sexually transmitted infection are 2-5 times more likely to contract HIV, the virus that can cause AIDS.

Health officials say that a lack of information, misconceptions and social stigma may keep many people from getting tested. Others mistakenly think they have been tested as part of routine health care. The only way to know for sure is to be tested.

Sarasota County joins organizations across the nation, including the CDC, the Florida Department of Health and its county health departments, Planned Parenthood Federation of America and its network of health centers, the Kaiser Family Foundation, MTV and others in the National STD Awareness month award-winning campaign, "[Get Yourself Tested or GYT.](#)"

[GYT](#) encourages people under age 25 to talk with health care providers and partners about getting tested for sexually transmitted diseases.

For a healthy tomorrow, prevent STDs today:

- Talk with your partner and health care provider about ways to reduce risk of infection, and about recommended vaccinations and testing.
- Get tested. Visit findSTDtest.org to find a test site near you.
- Seek out medical care to treat the disease and to prevent future infections.

For information on STD testing and treatment, call 941-861-2973. For more information, visit the Florida Department of Health's STD website, www.floridastd.com. The CDC also has a website, <http://www.cdc.gov/STD>, which includes podcasts and social media resources.

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