



PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

Syphilis outbreak in Nunavut

February 28, 2014

Syphilis is a serious disease that is spread during sex. The infection can also be passed from a pregnant woman to her unborn baby.

Syphilis was very rare in Nunavut, but since 2012 over 90 people have been diagnosed in different communities and this number continues to rise. Syphilis can affect anyone: youth and adults, men and women.

Syphilis symptoms can include a skin bump or sore around the genitals or mouth, and body rash. Many people infected with syphilis do not show any signs, so it is important to get tested early. Contact your local health centre or Public Health for the free and confidential syphilis blood test.

The infection does not go away on its own, even when the symptoms stop. Syphilis must be treated with antibiotics. Without treatment, it can cause serious harm to the heart and brain, and can even lead to death.

The best way to prevent syphilis is by practicing safer sex, like using condoms. Talk to your health care provider for more information.

Together we can stop syphilis in our communities.

Get tested. Get treated.

- Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Nunavut

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