



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Van Buren/Cass District Health Department Raises Awareness About Syphilis and Urges Testing to Prevent Health Complications

Lawrence, MI - As April marks Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) month, The Van Buren/Cass District Health Department (VBCDHD) is focused on raising awareness about the importance of routine screening for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), particularly syphilis.

The Van Buren/Cass District Health Department (VBCDHD) is sounding the alarm on the rising cases of syphilis in our communities and urging residents to get tested to prevent serious health complications. Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection caused by the bacterium *Treponema pallidum*, and if left untreated, it can lead to severe health issues and even death.

Dr. Larry Wile, MD, Medical Director at VBCDHD, emphasizes the importance of early detection and treatment: "Initial syphilis symptoms such as sores usually last 3 to 6 weeks and may go away on their own. However, without proper treatment, syphilis remains in the body and can progress to more severe stages, causing visual impairment, hearing loss, neurological problems like dementia, and ultimately posing a risk of death."

Syphilis is especially concerning during pregnancy as it can lead to congenital syphilis, which can cause severe complications for the baby, including severe birth defects and death. Dr. Wile stresses, "Congenital syphilis is preventable through timely testing and treatment. It's crucial for pregnant individuals to get tested to protect both themselves and their babies from this debilitating and life-threatening disease."

The key takeaways regarding syphilis and congenital syphilis are:

- **Increasing Cases:** Syphilis cases are on the rise in the United States, including our local communities.
- **Health Risks:** Untreated syphilis can lead to major health problems, including death, and congenital syphilis can cause severe complications for babies.
- **Preventable:** Syphilis and congenital syphilis are preventable through early testing, diagnosis, and treatment.



Van Buren/Cass District
Health Department

PUBLIC HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

VBCDHD encourages individuals to take proactive steps towards their health by getting tested for syphilis and practicing safe sexual behaviors to reduce the risk of exposure. For more information on testing and available resources, please contact VBCDHD at (269) 621 - 3143 or visit our website at www.vbcassdhd.org.

About Van Buren/Cass District Health Department:

The Van Buren/Cass District Health Department works to protect and promote the health and well-being of residents in Van Buren and Cass counties through education, prevention, and community partnerships.

For more information on syphilis, check out the Syphilis Fact Sheet from CDC: [Syphilis Fact Sheet from CDC](#)

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