



DUPAGE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

111 North County Farm Road, Wheaton, Illinois 60187

(630) 682-7400

www.dupagehealth.org

January 14, 2010

Dear DuPage County Physicians and Laboratory Directors:

The DuPage County Health Department (DCHD), in consultation with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) STD Program, is sending this notice to inform the DuPage County medical community of **an increase in reported syphilis cases in our county**. In 2008, 18 cases of early syphilis (less than one year's duration) were reported. To date, we have received reports of 26 cases from 2009, representing a **44% increase** in early syphilis cases. The DuPage County Health Department is requesting the assistance of physicians, practitioners, and laboratory staff at local hospitals to counteract this recent increase in early syphilis cases. **To assist in rapid identification and prompt intervention:**

- Be alert to possible cases of syphilis and **test sexually active clients who have been diagnosed with another STD and/or HIV and those who have an infected sex partner.**
- Also perform a serologic test for syphilis on **patients with signs/symptoms of early syphilis** (e.g., single or multiple genital or oral lesions, palmar/plantar or body rash, enlarged lymph nodes and patchy hair loss).
- Test **all pregnant women**, as is required by Illinois statute, for syphilis at the first prenatal visit and again during the third trimester. Effective prevention and detection of congenital syphilis depends on the identification of syphilis in pregnant women.
- Persons who were **exposed within the 90 days preceding the diagnosis of primary, secondary, or early latent syphilis in a sex partner** might be infected even if seronegative; therefore, such persons **should be treated presumptively**.
- **Report all reactive syphilis serology results (RPR, FTA-ABS, EIA, VDRL, TP-PA, etc.) or presumptive diagnoses within 24 hours** by calling the DCHD Disease Control Program at **630-682-7979, ext. 7553**. Laboratory reporting should include the test result and date of collection; the patient's name, address, race, gender, and date of birth; the name and phone number of the physician who ordered the test; and treatment status (when known).
- **Immediately alert** both DCHD Disease Control Program (630-682-7979, ext. 7553) and IDPH STD Program (217-782-2747) **of positive reportable STD test results (syphilis, chlamydia, and gonorrhea) in children <12 years of age**.
- In addition to clinical evaluation, diagnostic testing, and appropriate treatment and follow-up for syphilis, **all patients who have syphilis should be tested for HIV infection**.
- Every person being evaluated or treated for an STD, who is not already vaccinated, should receive **hepatitis B vaccination**. In addition, some persons (e.g., men who have sex with men and illegal-drug users) should receive **hepatitis A vaccination**.
- Educate patients about syphilis, STD prevention, and the importance of partner referral, informing them that syphilis is a reportable disease and that the health department will confidentially contact them to provide disease counseling and to elicit partner information.
- Counseling skills, characterized by respect, compassion, and a nonjudgmental attitude toward all patients, are essential to obtaining a thorough sexual history and to delivering prevention messages effectively.

For questions or to report a case, please call the DuPage County Health Department Disease Control Program at 630-682-7979, ext. 7553. Additional information on syphilis prevention and control is available at www.idph.state.il.us/public/hb/hbsyph.htm and www.cdc.gov/std/syphilis/default.htm. If you would like to receive copies of either the current CDC Sexually Transmitted Disease Treatment Guidelines or a laminated one-page treatment guide, please contact the Disease Control Program. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Rashmi Chugh, M.D., M.P.H.
Medical Officer

Maureen McHugh
Executive Director

Everyone, Everywhere, Everyday

In an emergency go to www.protectdupage.org and tune into WDCB 90.9 fm radio.