

# Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT\*

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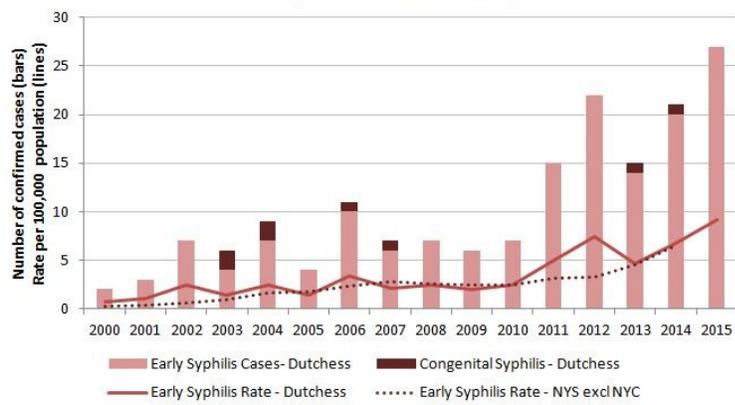
## ***Infectious Syphilis Cases Continue to Rise in Dutchess County*** Thursday, June 2, 2016 - 10am

- Since January 2016, 17 new cases of early syphilis have been confirmed in Dutchess County. This is the highest year-to-date total in the past decade. If these rates continue, syphilis cases in Dutchess County could double compared to 2015. Rates of syphilis also continue to rise across New York State (Table 1).
- Rates of other sexually transmitted diseases have also increased. Chlamydia rates have increased by 85% (2011-2015 vs 2001-2005); and while HIV has decreased across New York State, HIV rates have increased slightly in Dutchess in the past five years.
- In April, the FDA reported a national shortage of Pfizer's Bicilin L-A (Penicillin G benzathine), the only recommended treatment for pregnant women infected or exposed to syphilis. [www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/drugnotices/bicilinshortage.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/drugnotices/bicilinshortage.htm)
- Report all suspect and confirmed syphilis cases promptly to the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health at (845) 486-3402. The Department can also assist providers with securing treatment including Bicilin L-A for their patients, partner notification, and offers STD testing at their clinic ([www.dutchessny.gov/clinics](http://www.dutchessny.gov/clinics)).

### **Recommendations (See attached updated tool\*):**

- Conduct a complete sexual risk assessment.
- **Screen and test** individuals for **syphilis** (reverse sequencing testing if available), **HIV, and other STDs.** <http://www.cdc.gov/std/syphilis/Syphilis-Webinar-Slides.pdf>
- Examine all exposed sites as well as mouth, anus, cervix, vagina, hands, and feet for syphilitic lesions.
- **Treat promptly**, especially high-risk populations such as **MSM and pregnant women.**
- Encourage patients with syphilis to refer their partners for testing and prophylaxis.
- Immediately report cases to **DBCH at (845) 486-3402.**

Early Syphilis (Primary, Secondary, and Early Latent Stage) and Congenital Cases  
Dutchess County and New York State excluding NYC



Source: New York State Department of Health Communicable Disease Registry

\* Syphilis & STD Risk Assessment Tool is also available at [www.dutchessny.gov/SyphilisRiskAssessment](http://www.dutchessny.gov/SyphilisRiskAssessment)

\***Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention; **Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action; **Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

**Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health**

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# Syphilis & STD Risk Assessment Tool

Updated May 2016

Reverse Sequence Syphilis Screening (Slide 49) <http://www.cdc.gov/std/syphilis/Syphilis-Webinar-Slides.pdf>

## ASSESS RISK

Ask all individuals, particularly MSMs, in the past six months:

- # of Partners
- Partner Gender
- Sexual Practices
- Use of Social Media and apps to meet sex partners

## EXAMINE

Carefully inspect any and all exposed sites for syphilitic lesions, including:

- Mouth • Cervix • Hands
- Anus • Vagina • Feet

Symptoms include a large painless sore and rash, usually on hands & feet.

## SCREEN

- Sexually Active & MSM & Sexually Active with HIV
- Newly-Diagnosed HIV
- Persons Diagnosed with other STDs
- Sex Partners of Known Syphilis Cases
- Pregnant Women at the First Prenatal Visit & All Newborns At Delivery

## TEST

**MAINTAIN A HIGH INDEX OF SUSPICIAN FOR SYPHILIS - ORDER ALL:**

1. Reverse Sequencing If Available (EIA or CIA)
2. RPR
3. Treponemal Confirmatory Test (FTA-ABS or TP-PA)  
▶ Indicate on Lab Slip: "Early Syphilis Suspected"

**ALSO: TEST those with Syphilis for HIV, Gonorrhea, Chlamydia, and Hepatitis.**

## TREAT PROMPTLY

**Suspect Syphilis? Treat Immediately!**

- Single dose intramuscular benzathine penicillin G Bicillin® L-A - 2.4 million units as first line therapy.
- Follow-up clinical & serological evaluation at 6 & 12 months, or sooner.

## FACILITATE COLLABORATE REPORT

**REPORT all suspect and confirmed syphilis cases promptly to:**

**Department of Behavioral & Community Health  
(845) 486-3402**

The Department can also assist you with treatment and facilitating Partner Notification Services.