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**ALERT: Syphilis Cases on the Rise!**

Jackson County Health Department is seeing an alarming increase in syphilis cases, with a nearly double increase in cases from 2021. A public health alert has been sent to local physicians and health clinics. Many other counties throughout the State of Illinois are also seeing a rise in cases. There is a large correlation between HIV and syphilis cases.

In the last decade, there has been a marked resurgence of syphilis in the United States despite the availability of effective treatments and previously reliable prevention strategies. **There has been a recent increase among women of childbearing age, coinciding with a concerning rise of syphilis cases at birth (congenital cases).**

For a disease that was thought to be nearly eradicated, the recent resurgence is alarming to public health officials. Untreated syphilis is associated with detrimental health outcomes, including potentially life-altering health consequences such as hearing loss, blindness, neurological complications and the increased risk of contracting other sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV.

What actions can people take to reduce the risk of syphilis? Recommended actions include requesting comprehensive STD testing from their physician or clinic, reducing their number of sexual partners, and using protection, such as condoms.

Jackson County Health Department offers services to reduce people’s risk of syphilis and HIV. These services include no-cost PrEP services, low-cost sexual health clinic, and for those with HIV, assisting them in the navigation of HIV medication and other supportive services.

Call Jackson County Health Department at (618) 684-3143, ext. 155 for more information or an appointment.

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