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For Immediate Release

Syphilis outbreak in Labrador-Grenfell Zone

Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services (NLHS) has declared a syphilis outbreak in the Labrador-Grenfell Zone. Cases of syphilis have been on the rise in Canada and around the globe. While there are no known active cases of syphilis in Nunatsiavut, residents are asked to help stop the spread.

Syphilis can be spread in different ways including vaginal, anal, oral sex, and skin contact with a syphilis sore or rash. Many people don't notice symptoms or realize they're infected – the first sign is often a small bump or sore where syphilis was transmitted, which then goes away on its own. Syphilis can be easily treated by an antibiotic, but needs a health-care provider to give treatment. If syphilis is not treated promptly, it can cause serious long-term health problems. Syphilis can also be passed from a pregnant person to their baby, which can lead to severe illness or death (up to 20 per cent of infected babies die before birth).

To protect yourself, your partners, and your family, use condoms when having sex and get tested if:

- You have any symptoms of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including syphilis, such as a new bump or sore on your genitals, or an unexplained rash.
- You have had sex with someone who has an STI or symptoms of an STI, or if a health-care provider has informed you that you are a contact of someone with an STI.
- You have new, casual, or multiple sex partners – you should get tested every three-to-six months.
- You are pregnant – you should get tested once at the beginning of your pregnancy, again at 28 weeks of pregnancy, and possibly again at the time of delivery.

To get testing, see your local Regional Community Clinic Nurse.

For more information, please visit the Health Information page on syphilis:
<https://hi.easternhealth.ca/healthy-living/sexual-health/stis/syphilis/>.