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April-STD Awareness Week- “Talk. Test. Treat.”

Each year in April the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department recognizes Sexual Transmitted Diseases (STD) Awareness Week as an opportunity to raise awareness about local trends in STD infections and to elicit the support of our medical partners with public health prevention efforts. This year’s theme for STD Awareness Week is “Talk.Test.Treat,

While the idea of Talk. Test. Treat. is simple, STD prevention and treatment are not one-size-fits-all. We encourage you to revisit the many ways that you can empower your patients to take charge of their sexual health.

TALK - Providing the best medical care possible means talking to your patients about sexual health.

- Make sure your patients are comfortable and in a private space, especially before asking sensitive questions; this includes assuring patients their confidentiality is protected.
- Help normalize sexual health questions and STD/HIV testing recommendations by letting your patients know you ask these questions and offer these services to all patients, as sexual health is a normal part of a person’s overall health and well-being.
- Avoid making assumptions about your patients; asking is the only way to know for sure. Standardize sexual orientation/gender identity (SOGI) questions and use open-ended questions when taking a sexual history.
- If your patient is hesitant to answer a question, try rephrasing it or briefly explain why you are asking it.

TEST - Test your patients for STDs as recommended.

- [California STD Screening Recommendations](#)
- [Expanded Syphilis Screening Recommendations for the Prevention of Congenital Syphilis](#)
- [California Dear Colleague Letter – Extragenital Testing](#)
- All adults and adolescents from age 13 to age 64 should be tested at least once for HIV
 - Repeat screening of high-risk individuals should be done annually, or every 3-6 months, as indicated by risk

TREAT- Follow California STD Treatment Guidelines to ensure appropriate treatment and care. The 2015 STD Treatment Guidelines are the most current recommendations for treating patients who have, or who are at risk for STDs.

- [STD Treatment Guidelines for Adults & Adolescents, 2015](#)

- **UPDATED GONORRHEA TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**
 - CDC's updated recommendations for the treatment of uncomplicated gonorrhea in adolescents and adults: two-drug approach is no longer recommended; **treat with just one 500 mg injection of ceftriaxone.**
- Reinfection is common for some STDs. Encourage your patients to return for follow-up testing in three months.

Thank you for your ongoing support to keep your patients and our community healthy. Please contact our Disease Control Office at (805) 681-5280 or visit our website at www.sbcphd.org/dcp for any questions regarding STD or communicable disease reporting or screening questions.