

# ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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## Prom Season is here....

While sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) affect individuals of all ages, STDs take a particularly heavy toll on young people. Center for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that youth ages 15-24 make up just over one quarter of the sexually active population, but account for half of the 20 million new sexually transmitted infections that occur in the United States each year.

**May and June are prom season months, a time to get educated and tested for STDs.** Some of the most common STDs are chlamydia, herpes and gonorrhea.

### Know the facts! GYT: Get Yourself Tested

False assumptions about STDs—how they're spread, treated, and prevented—are everywhere, and it can be hard for young people to get the facts. Here are six facts you need to know:

- You can't tell someone has an STD just by looking at them.
- STD tests aren't always a part of a regular doctor visit.
- Almost all STDs that can be spread via unprotected vaginal sex can also be spread through unprotected oral and anal sex.
- Using a condom can take some of the worry out of sex, since it can prevent unintended pregnancy and protect you from STDs.
- Even if you use birth control, you should still think about STD prevention. Birth control methods like the pill, patch, ring, and IUD are very effective at preventing pregnancy, but they do not protect against STDs and HIV.
- STD testing is a basic part of staying healthy.

### Know the Facts

Half of all sexually active young people in the United States will get an STD by the time they're 25—and **most won't know it!**

If you are sexually active you can lower your risk of getting STDs by:

- Being in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has been tested and does not have STDs.
- Limiting the number of people you have sex with
- Using latex condoms and dental dams the right way **every time** you have sex.
- Getting an **HPV vaccine**, which can protect you against diseases (including cancers) caused by the human papillomavirus.

### GYT: Get Yourself Tested

Getting yourself tested for STDs is one of the most important things you can do to protect your health. Not only is it quick and simple, it's also confidential. A 2014 study found that one-third of adolescents didn't talk about sexual health issues with their physicians at all during annual health visits. It is important to be honest with your health care provider about your sexual history so that he or she can provide you with the appropriate STD prevention guidance, testing and treatment. If you're not comfortable talking with your regular health care provider about STDs, there are many clinics that provide confidential and free or low-cost testing and treatment.

OUCHD Utica Clinic number (315) 798-5747