

Sexually Transmitted Infection - Syphilis

Why Is This Important?

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) spread through direct contact with a painless syphilis sore or rash through unprotected sex. Syphilis can also be transmitted from a pregnant woman to her baby during pregnancy or childbirth and, if left untreated, causes birth defects or death to the fetus. Untreated syphilis leads to organ and neurological damage and may cause death.

Infectious syphilis, reported here, includes *primary, secondary or early latent* syphilis cases (See [About the Data](#)).

What Is Being Done?

[What's Being Done In Saskatoon Health Region to Reduce STIs and Bloodborne Illness?](#)

To Learn More:

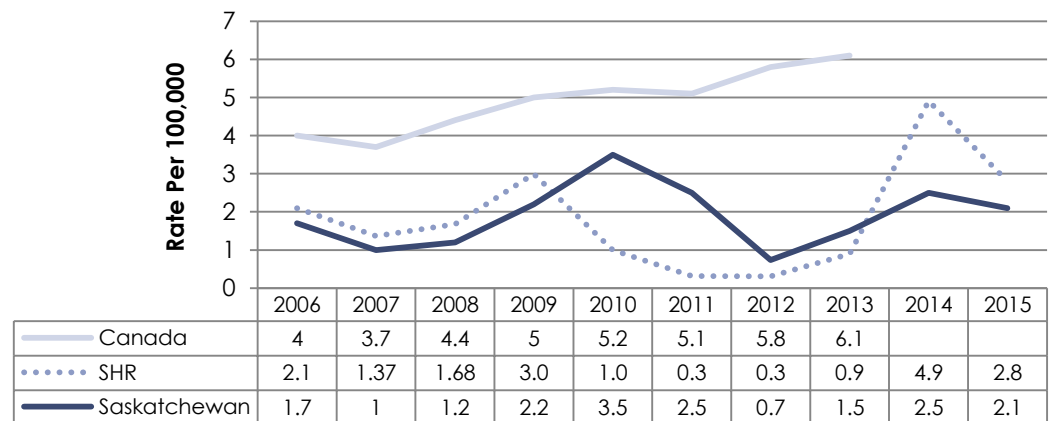
Chief Medical Health Officer's [Call to Action](#)

Highlights

After a period of decline syphilis rates are increasing again in the Region.

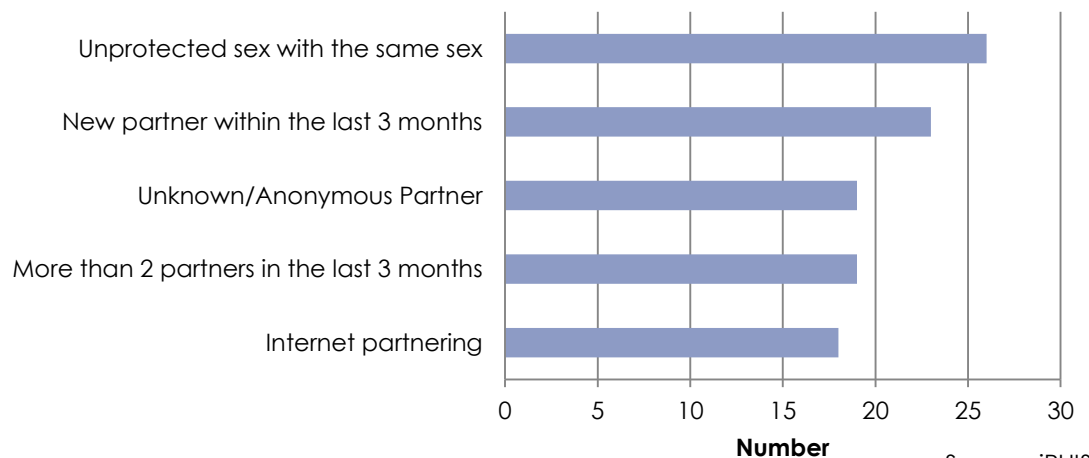
- Infectious syphilis rates in Saskatoon Health Region have been lower than national rates historically and lower than provincial rates between 2009 and 2012 (*Figure 1*). An outbreak, beginning in 2013, increased the rate dramatically.
- The Region's 2015 infectious syphilis rate was 2.8 per 100,000, a decrease from 2014 but still higher than the five year average (*Figure 1*).
- The leading transmission risks for infectious syphilis since 2009 were male sex with men, new and anonymous partners (*Figure 2*). Multiple partners and seeking partners online (internet partnering) are also important drivers of the outbreak.
- Of the total infectious cases reported since 2013, all were male. Sixty percent were over 30 years of age (*not shown*).
- Reports of non-infectious (late latent) cases exceed infectious syphilis cases. See [percentage syphilis by stage of disease](#).

Figure 1: Infectious Syphilis Rate per 100,000 Population, Saskatoon Health Region, Saskatchewan, and Canada, 2006 to 2015



Source: PHAC, iPHIS, Saskatchewan Ministry of Health

Figure 2: Top Five Infectious Syphilis Transmission Risks, Saskatoon Health Region, 2013-2015



Source: iPHIS