Youth Sexual Health in Hamilton and Ontario

Key Messages

- Locally, STIs are on the rise. Chlamydia is the most common STI among youth (age 15-19).
- Pregnancy among youth is decreasing, but Hamilton is still higher than the Ontario average.
- Educating and preparing youth today will reduce their risk during early adulthood.
- Engage with youth in what and how they want to learn and provide opportunities for skill development.
- Learning how to build healthy relationships promotes healthy sexuality.

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)*

Sexually transmitted infections are rising in Hamilton, especially among young adults.

Chlamydia
- Chlamydia is most commonly diagnosed in Hamiltonians age 15-19 and 20-24 years
- There were 318 chlamydia cases diagnosed in Hamilton youth in 2018

Chlamydia cases per 1,000 youth (age 15-19):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Hamilton</th>
<th>Ontario</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gonorrhea
- Compared to chlamydia, risk of gonorrhea infection is lower among youth age 15-19
- There were 39 gonorrhea cases diagnosed in Hamilton youth in 2018

Gonorrhea cases per 1,000 youth (age 15-19):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Hamilton</th>
<th>Ontario</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STI Prevention

- Choose abstinence
- Use condoms correctly and consistently
- Reduce number of sexual partners
- Get tested regularly
- Get vaccinated for HPV and Hepatitis B

Note: syphilis and HIV are rare among youth.

*Data source: Public Health Ontario; IntelliHEALTH ONTARIO and BORN 2009-2015
Youth Sexual Health in Hamilton and Ontario

Pregnancy

- Youth (age 15-19) pregnancy rate in Hamilton is decreasing, but is still consistently higher than Ontario.
- There are some priority areas in Hamilton where the youth pregnancy rate is double the city average.
- In 2009, 60% of youth pregnancies resulted in therapeutic abortions. In 2018, this number decreased to 46%.

What Youth Want to know about Sexual Health*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationships &amp; Dating</th>
<th>Sexual Pleasures</th>
<th>Medical Aspects of Sexual Health</th>
<th>Birth Control &amp; Pregnancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Where Youth Go for Sexual Health Information*

Among Waterloo Youth:

- Friends: 65%
- Parents/caregivers: 44%
- Internet: 44%
- Siblings or other relatives: 30%
- Doctor: 30%

Within schools, youth identified the following as sources of sexual health information:

- Physical education teachers
- Religion/family life teachers
- Guidance counselors

Evidence shows providing these key individuals with correct sexual health information and up-to-date resources is important to ensure youth have positive and effective conversations about sexual health*.

In schools, youth need the following for effective conversations about sexual health:

- Classrooms with a high level of engagement in the learning process
- Classrooms involving skill based and interactive learning
- Trust between students and teachers

*References: