

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)*

Note: syphilis and HIV are rare among youth.

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):

7.7

Hamilton,
2005

9.8

Hamilton,
2018

10.7

Ontario,
2018

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):

1.0

Hamilton,
2005

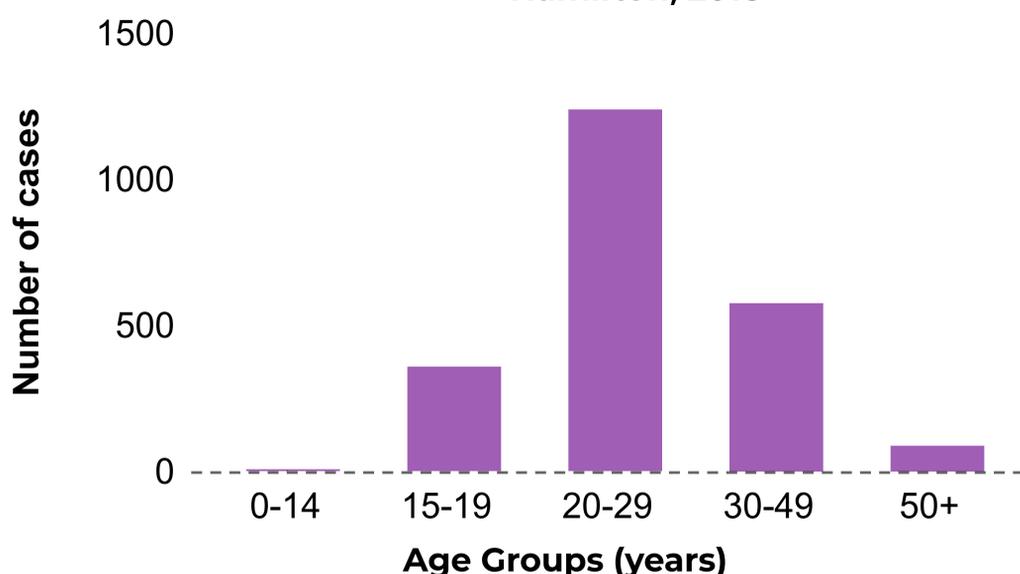
1.2

Hamilton,
2018

1.1

Ontario,
2018

Number of chlamydia cases in Hamilton, 2018



STI Prevention

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

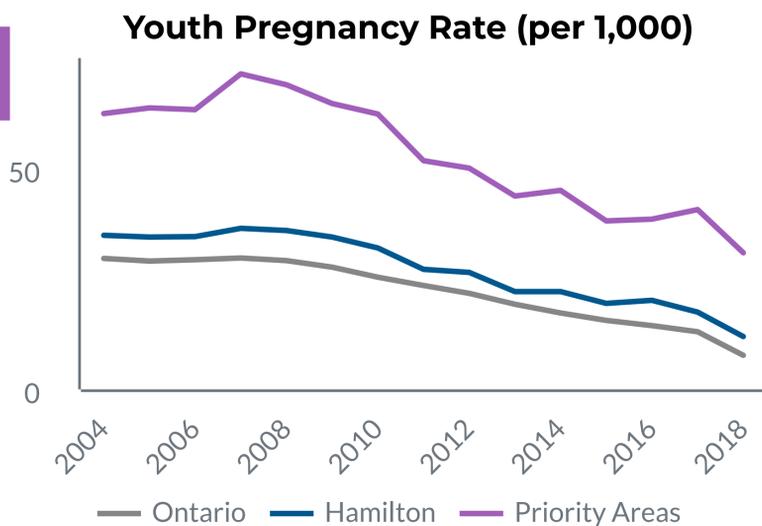


The most common reason for getting an STI is **not wearing a condom!**

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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%



PREVENT

- To prevent unplanned pregnancy:
- Increase student self-esteem
 - Increase a student's sense of belonging within the community
 - Start prevention programs much earlier than currently offered

What Youth Want to know about Sexual Health*

Relationships & Dating

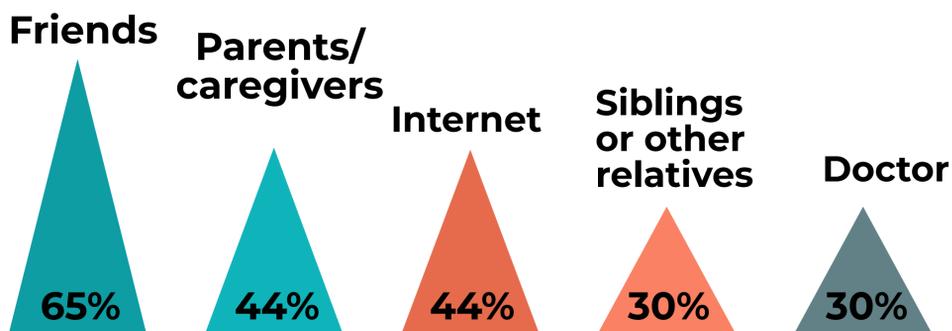
Sexual Pleasures

Medical Aspects of Sexual Health

Birth Control & Pregnancy

Where Youth Go for Sexual Health Information*

Among Waterloo Youth:



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:

- [1] Region of Waterloo. 2010. Review of Public Health's Sexual Health Services for Secondary School Students in Waterloo Region.
 [2] Muis et al. 2016. Sex Ed for Generation Z: A literature review on how public health can support teachers in delivering sexual health education. Literature Review, Hamilton: Hamilton Public Health Services.