

Press release: An STI is diagnosed in a young person every 4 minutes in England

Latest statistics from Public Health England (PHE) show that a case of chlamydia or gonorrhoea is diagnosed in a young person every 4 minutes in England. There were over 144,000 diagnoses of these sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in people aged 15 to 24 in 2017.

PHE's 'Protect Against STIs' campaign highlights the increased likelihood of contracting a life-changing STI if people have sex without a condom. The impact of having an STI is significant, particularly if left untreated as they can cause major health issues, including pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, swollen or painful testicles, and reactive arthritis. In pregnant women, STIs can lead to higher risk of miscarriage or stillbirth.

The majority of STIs (like chlamydia) are symptomless, and gonorrhoea is becoming increasingly resistant to antibiotics and at risk of becoming untreatable in the future. PHE's campaign, therefore, encourages condom use, as prevention is better than cure.

Rates of STIs in England remain high across England, and there has been a significant year-on-year increase in certain cases like gonorrhoea (22% increase from 2016 to 2017).

In 2017, there were approximately 420,000 diagnoses of STIs in England and of those, chlamydia accounted for nearly half of them (200,000 diagnosis of chlamydia and over 44,000 diagnoses of gonorrhoea).

A large proportion of these STI diagnoses are amongst young people aged 15 to 24, who account for 63% of chlamydia diagnoses and 37% of gonorrhoea diagnoses.

In a bid to get the nation's young adults talking about and having safe sex, TV personality Sam Thompson (who appears in *Made in Chelsea* and *Celebs Go Dating*) hits the streets to find out young people's attitudes to sexual health and condom use.

In the first of 2 new films, Sam Thompson and Dr Sara Kayat visit a Further Education College to speak to young people about how much they know about sexual health.

Sam then heads to Warwick with Dr Joe Peterson Camp, to meet a number of students to talk to them about their own experiences of sexual health and uncover their attitude towards condoms.

Dr Hamish Mohammed, Consultant STI Scientist at Public Health England, said:

Young people are more likely to be diagnosed with an STI than people aged 25 and older. STIs present a real threat to young people, and without using condoms, young people are putting themselves and their partners at risk of getting an STI.

Sam Thompson said:

I'm on a mission to encourage young people across the country to use condoms, with the help of Dr Sara and Dr Joe. We're not talking about safe sex or normalising the use of condoms enough, and finding out all the facts about STIs has taught me so much, which I want to let everyone know about too, so we can limit the spread of STIs.

The most shocking thing I've learned is that some STIs are symptomless and that some are actually becoming harder to treat – that's scary. The best thing I've learned is that if you're under the age of 25, you can get condoms for free by just looking online for a free condom finder; I'm spreading that message far and wide.

There's really no excuse for people not to use condoms and we should all feel empowered to use them and to see condoms as a normal part of a healthy sex life.

TV Doctor and GP, Dr Sara Kayat, said:

Rates of STIs remain high in young people, and we want to make sure people know that the best way to protect themselves from getting an STI, is to use a condom.

Often STIs don't have any symptoms, with 4 in 10 cases of chlamydia in women and around half of the cases in men symptomless, and they can have serious consequences.

You can easily contract an STI or pass one on without even knowing it, so – as I tell my patients – make sure you use a condom.

The campaign launches on 25 October with a nationwide social media, digital audio, Out of Home advertising & PR campaign targeted at 16 to 24 year olds. It is being supported by a range of partners, including the Family Planning Association (FPA) and British Association for Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH).

Background

1. The films created by Sam Thompson, along with campaign advertising and images can be downloaded [here](#).
2. Dr Joe Peterson Camp is a doctor at Homerton Hospital in its Sexual Health and HIV Service.

3. Dr Sara Kayat is a GP at Grays Inn Road Medical Practice. Her main areas of expertise are Sexual and Reproductive Health, as well as surgical specialties like ENT and Orthopaedics.
4. The FPA is supporting the 'Protect against STIs' campaign by helping to deliver sexual health information and support to key audiences via their [Sexwise](#) website.

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