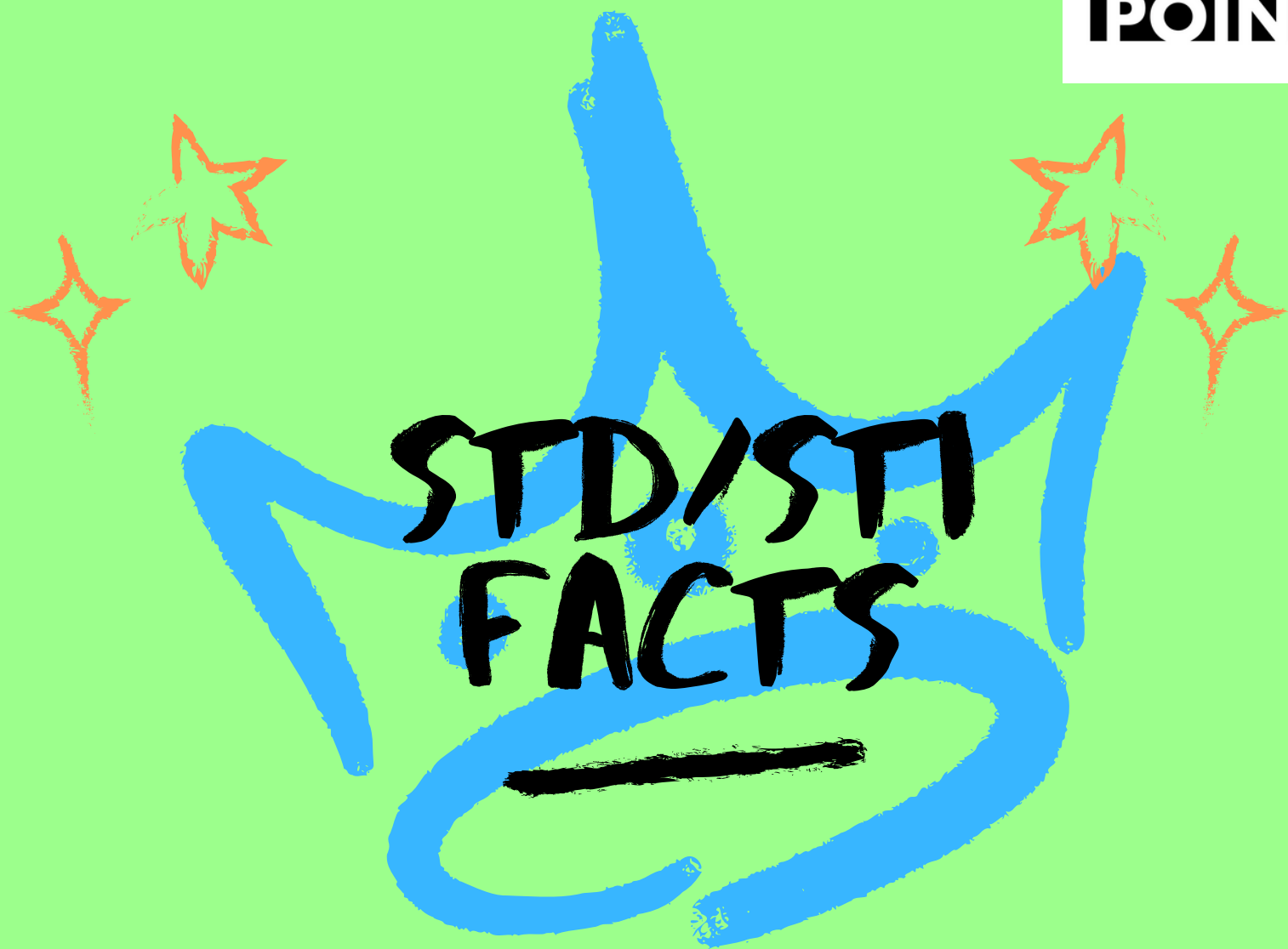


**MAINE
ACCESS
POINTS**



What is an STD/STI?

- Regardless of which term you use, they both mean the same thing a bacteria or virus that is spread via anal, oral or vaginal sex.
- Sexually Transmitted Disease is an older term and more well known
- Sexually Transmitted Infection is the most up to date and politically correct term. The term STI is less stigmatizing and more accurately describes the infection that is passed on from one person to another.
- Some STIs/STDs are also transmitted via blood to blood contact like HIV and Hepatitis C for example
- Some STIs/STDs are Chronic (long lasting/life long) some are Acute (short lasting) and some can be acute or chronic depending on the person.



Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

- HPV is the most common STI/STD in the United States. There were about 43 million HPV cases nationwide in 2018, many of those among teens and young adults in their early 20's.
- HPV has many different types. Some types can cause health problems including genital warts and certain cancers including cervical cancer, cancer of the vulva, vagina, penis, anus, or the back of the throat.
- Most people who have HPV do not have symptoms but sometimes people can experience painless lumps or growths around the vagina, penis, or anus.
- Although there is no cure for HPV, there is a vaccine that can prevent it.
- It is recommended that all people 26 years old and under get vaccinated for HPV.



Hepatitis B (HBV)

- Hepatitis B also known as HBV is a vaccine preventable liver infection that can be short (acute) or long lasting (chronic) It is much more likely to be chronic in children and infants than it is in adults
- Hepatitis B is spread when blood, semen, or other body fluids from a person infected with the virus enters the body of someone who is not infected.
- Transmission can happen from sexual contact or from sharing syringes or works (water, cottons, pipes)
- It is a myth that someone can catch Hepatitis B from reusing their own syringes, but someone can get other infections from reusing their own syringes.
- There is no cure for Hepatitis B.



Hepatitis C (HCV)

- The Hepatitis C Virus (also known as HCV) is spread through contact with infected blood and you will only be infected if the virus enters your bloodstream, so although it is possible to transmit HCV through sexual contact it is much more likely to be spread when sharing syringes, razors or works (water, straws, pipes, etc...)
- HCV is acute (short lasting) in about 25% of people. The other 75% end up with a chronic infection that can cause liver damage and liver cancer if not treated.
- It takes 8-11 weeks after exposure for HCV antibodies to show up on a screening. Therefore if you are at increased risk of HCV you should get an antibody screening every 3 months.
- Current treatment for HCV usually involves only 8-12 weeks of antiviral medications (with few side effects) that cures 90% of HCV infections.



HIV/AIDS



- HIV is a chronic disease. HIV/AIDS has no cure and there is no vaccine to prevent against it but there are treatments out today that allow people to live long lives and in many cases if taken correctly can almost eliminate the possibility of transmitting the virus sexually.
- The first case in the U.S. of what is now known as AIDS was reported in June 1981 from Los Angeles.
- HIV/AIDS is spread through blood to blood contact or through contact with infected bodily fluids such as semen, vaginal secretions and breast milk.
- Many people do not have symptoms of HIV for many years which is why it is good to get tested regularly.
- Anyone who is interested in protecting themselves against HIV exposure can take PreExposure Prophylaxis (PrEP).





U=U

Undetectable
Equals Untransmittable



If someone has HIV they will be put on antiretroviral therapy to stop the progression of the virus by lessening the amount of virus in the blood (reducing the viral load).

In many cases when someone takes their antiretroviral medications correctly they can get to a point where their viral load is undetectable.

If the viral load is undetectable then the virus cannot be transmitted via sex

Gonorrhea (GC)

- Gonorrhea is caused by the *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* bacterium.
- Gonorrhea is the second most common STI/STD in the U.S. and is most common amongst 15-24 year olds.
- Ejaculation doesn't have to occur for Gonorrhea to be transmitted.
- Gonorrhea can infect the genital area, rectum, eyes, throat or joints.
- Symptoms: **infection in the genital area** include: painful urination, discharge from the penis or vagina, bleeding between periods and/or after intercourse, pain in one testicle, and/or abdominal pain or pelvic pain.

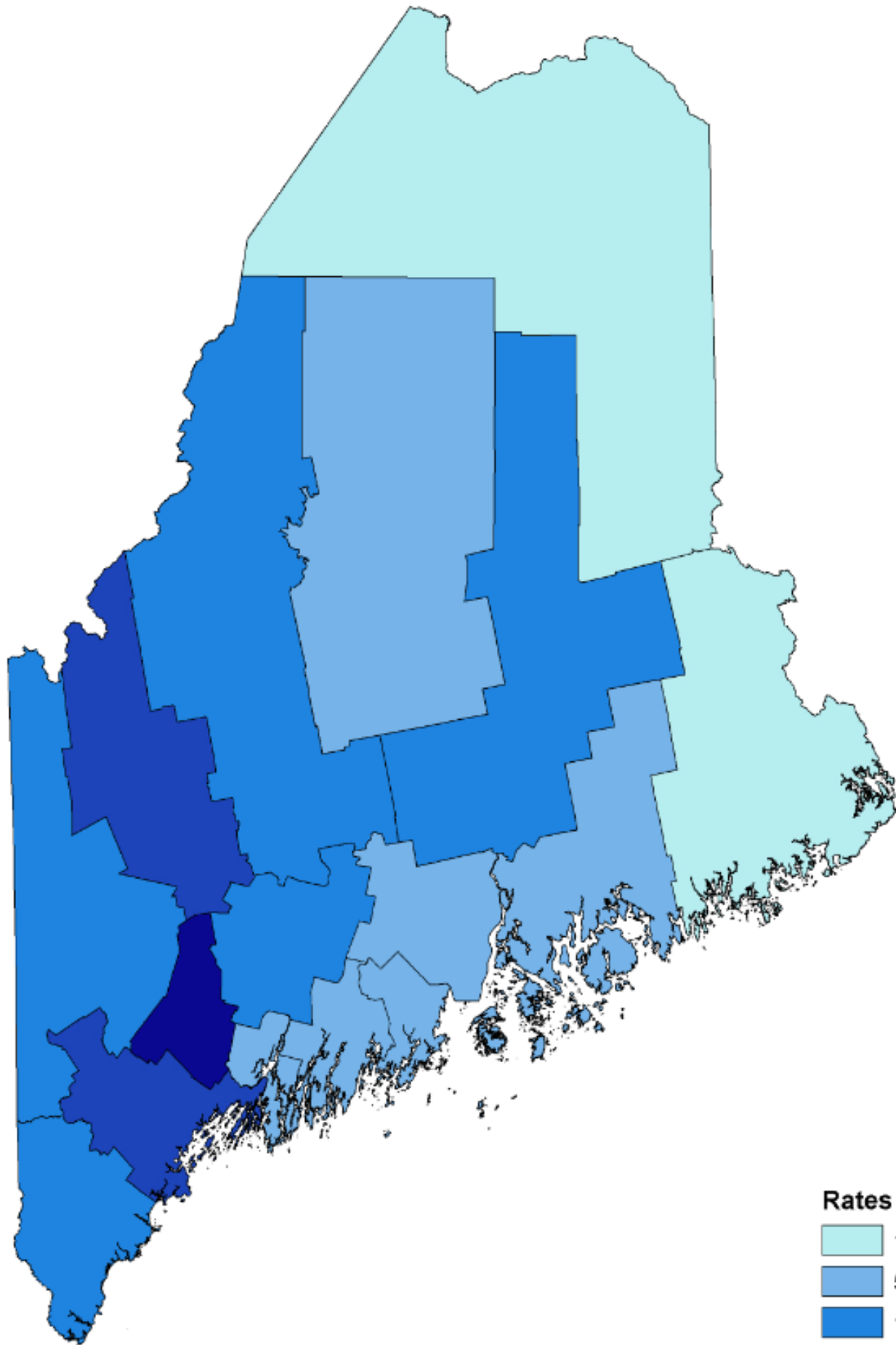


Gonorrhea (GC) Continued...

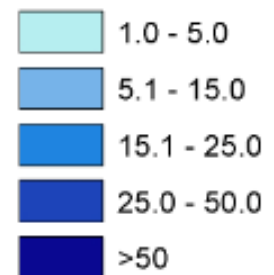
- Symptoms **in the rectum**: anal itching, pus like discharge from the anus, bright red blood spots on toilet paper, and having to strain with bowel movements,
- Symptoms **in the eyes**: eye pain, sensitivity to light, and pus-like discharge from one or both eyes.
- Symptoms **in the throat** sore throat and swollen lymph nodes in the neck.
- Symptoms **in the joints** the affected joints might be warm, red, swollen and extremely painful, especially during movement.
- Gonorrhea can be successfully treated and cured with the right antibiotics.



Gonorrhea Rate per 100,000 persons - Maine, 2015



Rates

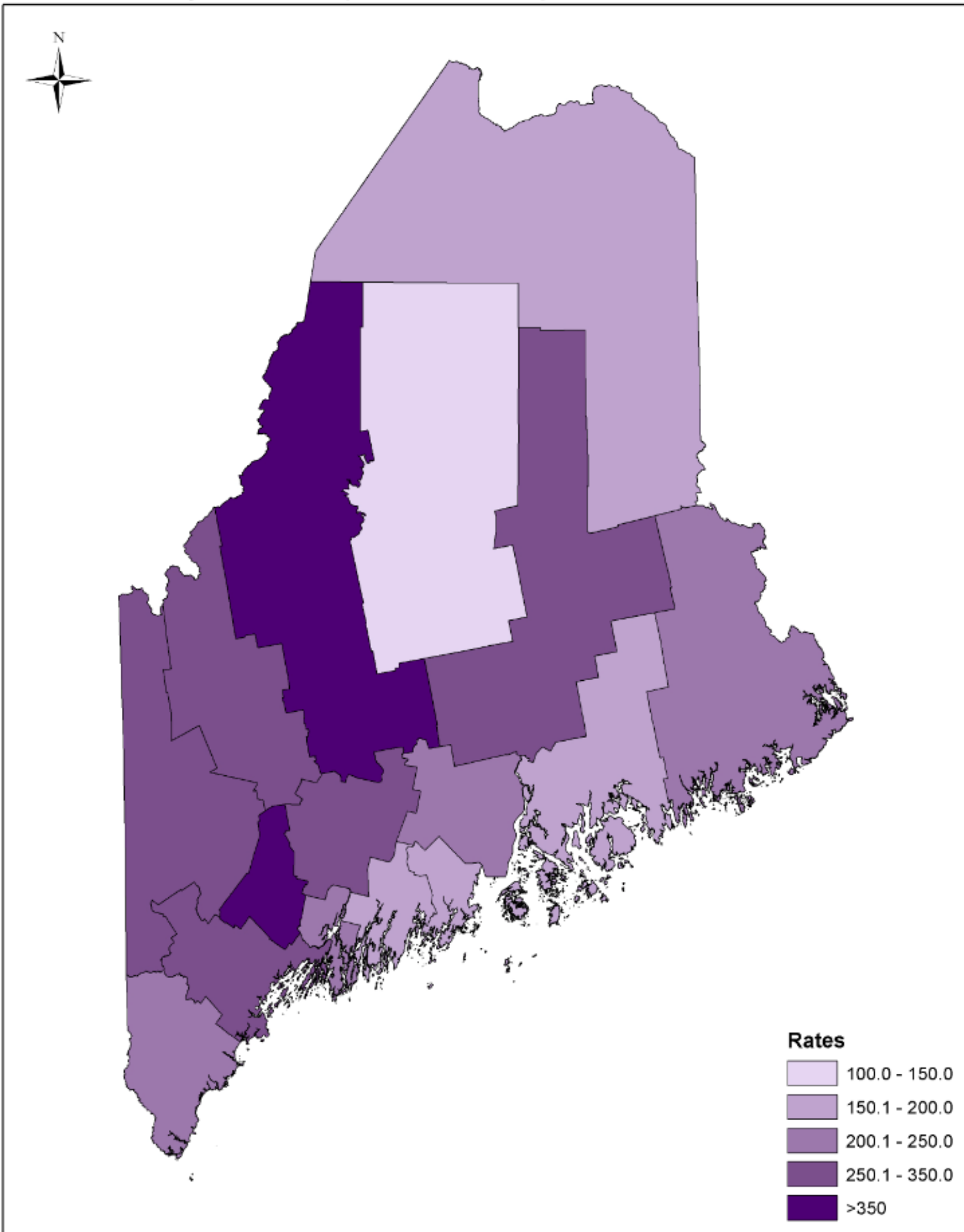


Chlamydia (CT)

- Chlamydia is the most common bacterial STD/STI reported in the United States.
- You can get chlamydia by having vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who is infected even if your sex partner does not ejaculate.
- A pregnant person that is infected with Chlamydia can pass it on to their newborn baby during childbirth.
- Symptoms Include: painful urination, discharge from the vagina or penis, painful sexual intercourse in women, bleeding between periods, or testicular pain.
- If left untreated in a person with a vagina it can cause long lasting damage to the female reproductive system.



Chlamydia Rate per 100,000 persons - Maine, 2015



Syphilis

- Syphilis can cause serious health problems if not treated.
- Syphilis is transmitted through direct contact with a Syphilis sore during oral, anal or vaginal sex or from birthing person to baby during childbirth.
- There are 4 stages of Syphilis (Primary, Secondary, Latent, and Tertiary)
- If left untreated Syphilis can cause damage to the heart, blood vessels, the brain and nervous system.
- Symptoms **Primary Stage**: a single sore around the area where Syphilis entered the body (the vagina, penis, anus, rectum, on the lips or in the mouth). The sore is usually round, firm, and painless and usually goes away in 3 to 6 weeks regardless of whether someone gets treatment or not.

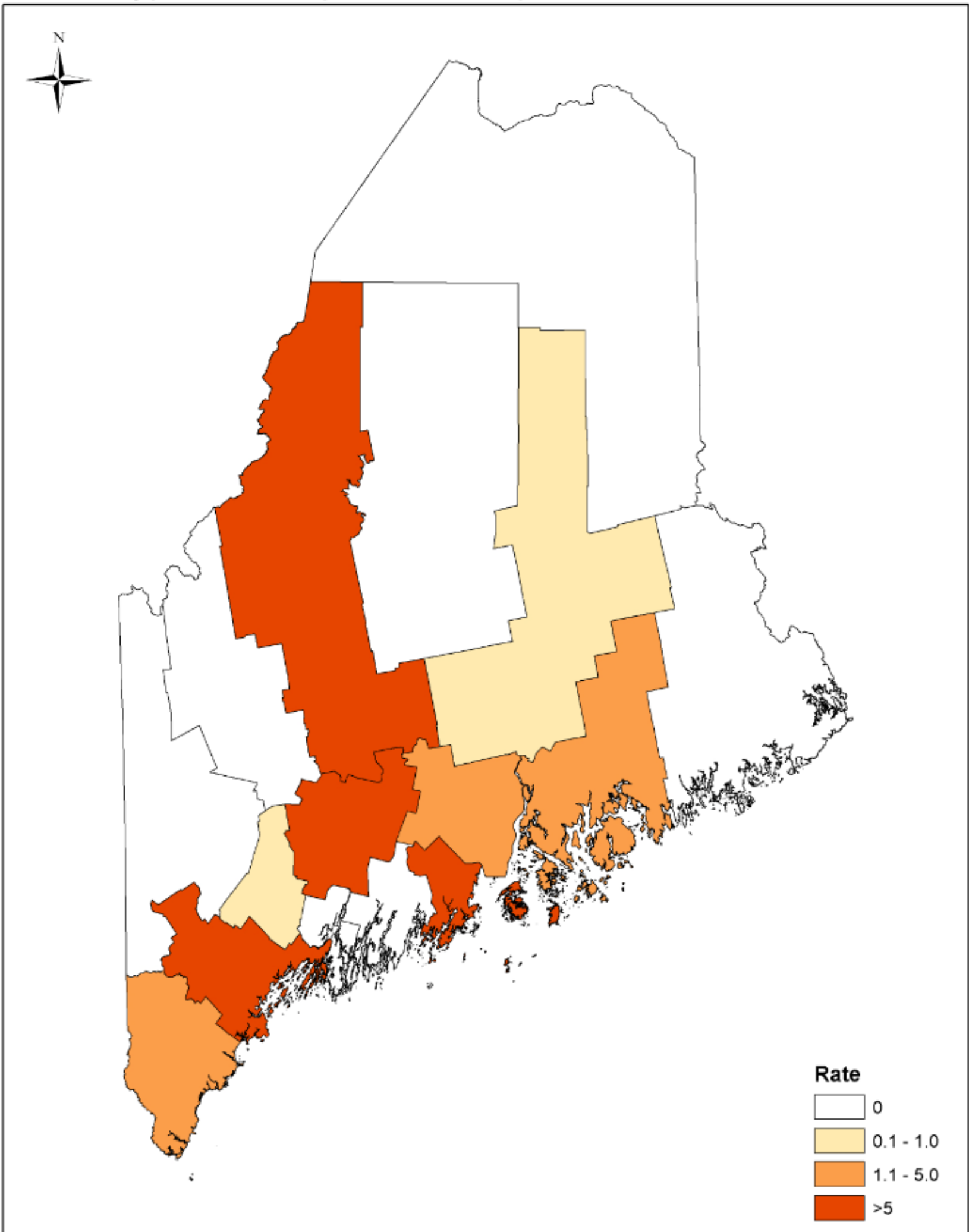


Syphilis Continued...

- Symptoms **Secondary Stage**: may have skin rashes and/or sores in your mouth, vagina, or anus. This stage usually starts with a rash in one or more areas of your body. The rash can show up while the original sore is healing or weeks after. Rash can also show up on the palms of the hand or soles of the feet. Other symptoms may include fever, swollen lymph glands, sore throat, patchy hair loss, headaches, weight loss, muscle aches and fatigue.
- Symptoms **Latent Stage**: a period when there are no visible signs or symptoms of Syphilis. Without treatment you can continue to have Syphilis in your body for years.
- Symptoms **Tertiary Stage**: Would occur between 10 and 30 years after becoming infected. Most people infected do not ever reach the Tertiary stage but when it does happen it can affect many different organ systems including the heart and the brain.



Syphilis Rate per 100,000 persons - Maine, 2015



Cisgender Women Vs. Cisgender Men and STIs and Blood Borne Diseases

Cisgender straight Women are more likely to contract an STI than cisgender straight men for societal and biological reasons.

- **Social/Economic:** Compared to men, women are more likely to have low status, income, education and power than their male counterparts.
- **Biological:** The vaginal surface is larger and more susceptible to STI's than the mostly skin covered penis also the amount of male ejaculate that is deposited into a woman's vagina is more than the cervical and vaginal secretions that the male will come into contact with.

LGBTQIA2S+ Individuals and STI's

- For Gay, Bisexual, or other men who have sex with men (MSM) there is an increased prevalence of HIV, Gonorrhea, and Syphilis compared to the general population
- Transfeminine people are 49 times more likely to contract HIV than all other adults
- The epidemiology of STIs amongst gay women and other women who have sex with women (WSW), Transmasculine, and Nonbinary individuals is not known because the research has not been conducted.

STD/STI Disparities amongst BIPOC Communities

- Research shows that there are higher rates of Primary and Secondary Stage Syphilis, Chlamydia and Gonorrhea infections among black individuals than among white individuals.
- The higher rates are not caused by ethnicity or cultural heritage. They are caused by systemic racism.
- In the United States, the highest reported rates of Gonorrhea infection are among sexually active teenagers, young adults, and African Americans.
- Nationally 40.3% of HIV cases are among Black and African American individuals while they only account for 13.4% of the overall population.

Important STD Facts to Know

- Rates of STD/STI's have been rising steadily from 2015 to 2019
- In 2020 Syphilis had a 1% decrease nationwide but numbers may be underrepresented due to the pandemic.
- 1 in 5 people in the U.S. have an STI
- Nearly half of new infections every year are in people between the ages of 15 and 24
- Many STD/STIs can lead to serious complications and/or infertility if left untreated.
- Many STD/STIs can be transmitted from birthing person to baby during childbirth or breastfeeding.

Safer Sex Practices

- **Use Condoms** (Preferrably Latex): Condoms can help prevent most STDs/STIs. *Someone can still become infected with Herpes or HPV even while wearing a condom.
- **Preventative measures:** for HPV and Hepatitis B there are vaccines available to protect people from ever being infected in the first place. For HIV you can take PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis)
- **Get Tested Regularly:** many STD/STIs cannot be detected on rapid tests for up to 90 days from exposure. If you think you have been exposed to certain STI/STDs there may be testing available to you prior to that window (especially STD/STIs that have Post Exposure (after exposure) treatments that must be started within so many days of exposure)



Safer Sex Practices

- **Know your Lube:** More lubrication is better than less. Know the different kinds available to you and what they are good for. Waterbased is more gentle on skin, doesn't stain, but needs to be applied more often, Silicone is stickier and thicker and good for rough penetration but are not good to use with toys as they are also made of silicone and will eventually ruin the toy, Aloe Based is more natural, doesn't have additives like glycerin, propylene glycol, or propanediol. It is a bit stickier than waterbased but not as sticky as silicone and won't break down toys.
- **Dental Dams:** many STD/STIs can be transmitted via oral sex so it is important to protect oneself just as they would when thinking about vaginal or anal sex.
- **Communication is Key:** talk to your partner about wanting you and them to be safe and how safer sex practices can be achieved by and be comfortable for both of you.



MAINE ACCESS POINTS

**For more information about or
linkage to vaccination, PrEP,
testing, or treatment**

**please Call/Text/Signal MAP's Director of Health
Services, Anna McConnell@**

207-319-8079



MAINE ACCESS POINTS

For Sexual Health supplies (variety of different condoms, Receptive [female] condoms, lube, dental dams, pregnancy tests, plan b) or for @Home HIV tests

Call/Text/Signal

Washington County: 207 370-1042

York County: 207 370-4782

Oxford County or Statewide: 207 370-9445