

Reproductive Health Education (RH Ed) is an educational newsletter from the Health Advocates at Finger Lakes Community Health. This newsletter covers all reproductive health topics, in addition to related services offered at our health centers.

April is
STD
Awareness Month

Sexually transmitted diseases (or infections, STI) are very common. In fact, 50% of people will contract an STI by the time they are 25. Sadly, many people still believe that if you have an STI it will, burn when you pee, or you will have large noticeable, uncomfortable sores. While that can be the case for some, about 80% of people with an STI will show no signs or symptoms. For this reason, it is recommended that everyone who has engaged in any type of sexual activity (oral, vaginal, anal) should get tested with every new partner or at minimum once a year for

STIs. Testing is very easy and can be requested at almost any doctor appointment. Medical providers may ask for a urine sample, where a patient urinates into a cup, which is then sent to a lab to test for gonorrhea and chlamydia. They may also do a physical exam to check for sores or discharge, during which a swab could be done. A blood draw may also be done in our office and sent to a lab to test for STI. The type of sex you have impacts where you need testing. If you have oral or anal sex, you may need to be swabbed in those areas for STIs as well. For that reason, it is very important to be honest with your medical provider about how many partners you have had and the type of sex you have.

The best way to protect against STIs is using a barrier method such as dental dams (used for oral sex), or male/external

or female/internal condoms during oral, anal, or vaginal sex. One common situation we see is that people perceive that oral and anal sex is less risky than vaginal sex, so they do not use protection. This is a dangerous practice as it could lead to an STI. For patients who are concerned about paying for STI testing or treatment, we contract with many groups to help cover the cost of testing, and may be able to offer it for free. During STI awareness month, it's important to remember to have safe sex, get tested regularly, and talk with your partner about how you plan to prevent STIs and pregnancy prior to engaging in sexual activity.

Provider Spotlight!



Written by Meghan Hutchings, PA
Finger Lakes Community Health

Help us help YOU by being honest about your needs.

“Often I will see a patient’s chief complaint says “personal problems,” or it will list one of their chronic health issues as the reason for their appointment. Then, when I am in the room, the patient will report that they want STI testing but they hadn’t wanted to tell the person on the phone the real reason for their appointment. I reassure them that everything they say in this office is confidential, even the reason for having an appointment in the first place. The patient will often be reluctant to answer questions about their sexual history as well. Never worry about disclosing anything to your health care provider! Nine times out of ten whatever you tell your provider is something they have heard before. You don’t have to worry about shocking anyone with anything you disclose, and more importantly, we cannot

provide the appropriate treatment and education if we don’t know the whole story.

Talking with your provider will help you build trust in that person, and then having a conversation about personal things will become easier. So, speak up! Tell your provider if you had unprotected sex, let them know that you are missing occasional doses of your oral birth control pills, and ask for education about how to properly use a condom all without fear of judgement. We are here to help you, and we can only do that if you are honest and open and let us know what you need.”

Locations:

Bath

Community Health
117 E. Steuben St
Bath, NY 14810
(607) 776-3063

Geneva

Community Health
601B Washington St
Geneva, NY 14456
(315) 781-8448

Newark

Community Health
513 W. Union St
Newark, NY 14513
(315) 573-7577

Ovid

Community Health
7150 N. Main Street
Ovid, NY 14521
(607) 403-0065

Penn Yan

Community Health
112 Kimball Ave
Penn Yan, NY 14527
(315) 536-2752

Port Byron

Community Health
60 Main St
Port Byron, NY 13140
(315) 776-9700

Sodus

Community Health
6692 Middle Rd
Suite 2100
Sodus, NY 14551
(315) 483-1199

Administrative Offices

14 Maiden Lane
Penn Yan, NY 14527
(315) 531-9102

April is also Sexual Assault Awareness Month!

Sexual Assault is sexual contact or behavior that occurs without consent of a victim. Consent obtained when engaging in sexual activity should be voluntary, free from coercion, and can be taken back. It's about communicating with your partner (every time) that you want to engage in the activity with them. Sexual assault can be rape, or attempted rape, fondling or unwanted sexual touching, or forcing someone to perform sexual acts. Force does not need to be physical, people may use emotional coercion, psychological force, or manipulation to get what they want. Despite common belief that sexual assaults occur randomly, 7 out of 10 sexual assaults occur by someone

who is known to the victim (Rainn.org). Seeking help immediately after an assault is important. Starting medications such as PEP (Post Exposure Prophylaxis) right away will help to reduce a victim's chance of contracting HIV, and Plan B emergency contraception can help decrease the chances of becoming pregnant and is most effective if taken with 24 hours of unprotected sex. We offer walk in appointments for reproductive health services (such as STD testing, treatment, access to Plan B and birth control, PEP medication and more) and our health centers have late night hours (till 8PM) at least one day a week. Call us with any questions for access to services or treatment .

Facts: (Source Dosomething.org)

- Being a victim of rape results in 32,000 pregnancies each year
- 80% of rape victims suffer chronic physical or psychological conditions
- 40% of rape survivors develop an STI as result of the assault
- Rape survivors are 13 times more likely to attempt suicide than people who have not been victims of a crime.

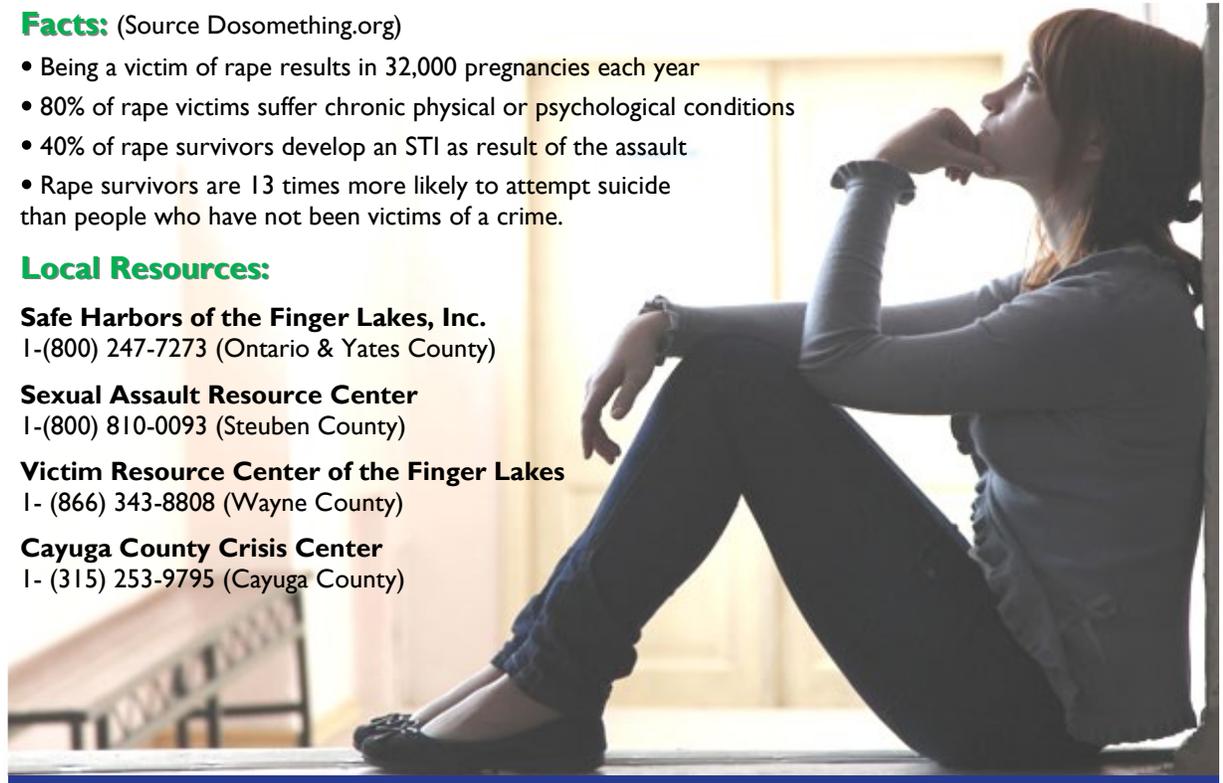
Local Resources:

Safe Harbors of the Finger Lakes, Inc.
1-(800) 247-7273 (Ontario & Yates County)

Sexual Assault Resource Center
1-(800) 810-0093 (Steuben County)

Victim Resource Center of the Finger Lakes
1- (866) 343-8808 (Wayne County)

Cayuga County Crisis Center
1- (315) 253-9795 (Cayuga County)



➔ **Would you like us to visit your program or school to provide evidence based programming on pregnancy prevention, STI prevention, healthy relationships and more? For more information visit www.localcommunityhealth.com or contact us today to schedule a time!**

➔ **Would you like to have the RHEd Newsletter emailed to you each month? If so, contact Olivia at:**



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