

February 5, 2024

From the Office of the Chief Medical Health Officer

## VCH Chlamydia and Gonorrhea Update 2024

As of February 5, 2024, Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) Public Health will follow up all reportable bacterial sexually transmitted infections that had previously been followed up by the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC). The transition for syphilis follow-up was made last year; starting today, for your patients residing in VCH who test positive for chlamydia (CT) or gonorrhea (GC), VCH Public Health will fax you a [new CT/GC Reporting Form](#) (previously known as the H208 form) along with a reminder of [current treatment and follow-up recommendations](#) for these infections. Please fax completed forms to VCH Public Health at 604-731-2756. For Fraser Health residents, there is no change in follow-up; please continue to send completed Health 208 forms to the BCCDC at 604-707-5604.

The transition in public health follow-up to VCH Public Health, consistent with the follow-up of all other reportable communicable diseases, will create more streamlined services for patients and clinicians. It will also facilitate public health strategies to address the higher reported rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea in VCH, compared to the rest of BC.

A reminder that the syphilis outbreak continues, and that those testing positive for chlamydia and gonorrhea are at higher risk of both syphilis and HIV infection. We recommend all clinicians following up cases of chlamydia and gonorrhea to offer testing for both syphilis and HIV, if this has not been done recently.

### A reminder of the current STI screening (chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, and HIV) recommendations in BC:

- 1) *Sexually active adults*: Offer STI screening every 3-6 months for any patients with new, multiple, or casual sexual partner(s).
- 2) *Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (gbMSM)*: Offer STI screening at least annually.
- 3) *Sexually active youth under 25 years of age*: Offer STI screening at least annually.
- 4) *Pregnant Patients*: Screen for STIs in the first trimester **and repeat syphilis serology at the time of delivery or after 35 weeks gestational age for home births.**

**Diagnostic tests** for chlamydia and gonorrhea consist of site-based testing utilizing nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs). Screen females using NAAT on vaginal or cervical swabs or first-void urine. Screen males using NAAT on first-void urine. As appropriate, obtain specimens of exposed extra-genital sites (pharyngeal and/or rectal). Patients are encouraged to review their STI results via [Health Gateway](#), to ensure specimen processing occurred and to obtain negative results.

**Treatment** for chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis is provided free of charge in BC and can be ordered through the BCCDC Pharmacy by using the [STI drug order request form](#). If you identify (on the reporting form) that your patient is **pregnant** or has a **pregnant contact**, a public health nurse will follow up with your office to offer assistance with follow-up. Positive cases tested in a VCH emergency department will receive public health follow-up to support treatment and partner notification.

### Further information and support:

1. Questions regarding STI diagnostics and treatment recommendations, or other clinical queries can be directed to the BCCDC STI physicians at 604-707-5610, or via the RACE line, 604-696-2131.
2. For support with partner notification or patients needing outreach services to complete treatment, please reach the VCH Communicable Disease Team at 604-562-4521, or via the main switchboard 604-675-3900.
3. Additional clinical information and resources for patients and healthcare providers can be found on the [VCH Bacterial STI page](#) (<https://www.vch.ca/en/health-topics/bacterial-stis>)

You can reach a Medical Health Officer at 604.675.3900 | Toll free at 1.855.675.3900  
For public health emergencies after hours, contact the Medical Health Officer on call at 604.527.4893

### Vancouver Coastal Health Medical Health Officers

Chief Medical Health Officer: Dr. Patricia Daly

Vancouver: Dr. Althea Hayden, Dr. Mark Lysyshyn, Dr. Michael Schwandt, Dr. Ceinwen Pope 604.675.3900

Richmond: Dr. Meena Dawar 604.233.3150 | North Shore: Dr. Alex Choi 604.983.6700 | Coastal Rural: Dr. Moliehi Khaketla 604.984.5070

To receive these updates by email, please contact us at [VCHPhysiciansUpdate@vch.ca](mailto:VCHPhysiciansUpdate@vch.ca)