

Press Release

Sexual Infections on the rise in the over 45s

Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust is launching a new campaign encouraging people over 45 to practice safe sex.

In England, Chlamydia rates for people in the 45-64 age bracket have increased by 87% between 2009 and 2013.

West Midlands figures show the same trend with a 148% increase in diagnosis of Chlamydia, which contrast with falling rates of Chlamydia in young people aged 15-24.

Similarly, rates of Genital Herpes in the West Midlands for the 45-64 age group have more than doubled between 2009 and 2013 while Gonorrhoea diagnoses have almost tripled.

Kate Wilson, Sexual Health Promotion Specialist at Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust, said:

“A number of factors can explain this trend. The figures can partly be attributed to greater awareness and increased acceptance of STI testing. Many people find themselves dating again as circumstances change. For some, pregnancy may no longer be a consideration as they are using long term reversible contraception methods, known as LARC, or have experienced the menopause. People therefore need to contemplate whether they are putting themselves at risk of infection and need to use condoms, as well as existing methods of contraception. It could be the first time that some have had to think about this for many years.

This campaign was born out of awareness that sexual health messages have a tendency to target young people, and therefore older groups may not realise how this apply to them. Chlamydia remains the most common bacterial STI in all age brackets. One of the reasons for this is that Chlamydia often has no symptoms. So people don't always realise they have it or have been exposed to it, or understand the need to be tested to reduce the chance of further health complications. It's imperative that people of all ages are aware of the consequences of unprotected sex and enjoy a healthy sex life. Our key message is that age is no protection to STIs.

Occasionally people are embarrassed at the prospect of acquiring condoms or visiting a sexual health service, however there really is no need to be. If anyone wants to talk about any aspect of sexual health or relationships, they are encouraged to visit a local

service, where they can get free contraception, including condoms. They can also be tested and treated for STIs - whatever their age. All services are free and confidential.”

If you have any concerns about your sexual health or need advice, call 0800 783 2936.
For more information about contraception and STIs visit www.playinitsafe.co.uk.

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