

**Volume 17
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Spring 2004

Inside this issue:

Fundraising News	2
Fundraising continued	3
Education Update	4
Support Services/ EHOP Update	5
News from the Volunteer Department	6
Here and There	7
Parting glance	8

Vesey Bulbs

For those of you who ordered bulbs from the ATB spring sale, thank you for your order! The bulbs will be in soon. We will be delivering them to you.

Don't forget—we will also be having a fall bulb sale. Watch for an email or fax from us in late summer or early fall. You'll enjoy seeing the flowers break through the last of the snow in the spring.



SUMMER PLANNING

The summer months have always been planning months for AIDS Thunder Bay. We get deeply immersed in preparing for events that take place later in the year: our annual Opening Doors Regional Counselling Conference, our annual AIDS Walk, our annual Visions and Light Film Festival, our Annual General Meeting. Various staff, board members and volunteers are all working on these events.

This summer there is a significant addition to our planning agenda. The AIDS Bureau of the Ontario Ministry of Health is mandating "Local Planning Initiatives" as part of the implementation of Ontario's HIV/AIDS Strategy to 2008. The Local Planning Initiatives (LPI) will take place in at least 12 different geographic regions of the province. The LPI are intended to bring together representatives of agencies that address some part of service or activity relating to HIV/AIDS in that local area. The intention is to bring people together, discuss and analyze how HIV/AIDS is being handled in our area, identify any gaps that may exist and write up a planning report to guide our work into the future years. AIDS Thunder Bay has been chosen to take a lead role in this planning exercise. We will be assisted by support from the AIDS Bureau that will include financial support to hire a health planner/researcher/writer, HIV epidemiological information about our region prepared by Dr. Robert Remus, some initial facilitation from the Ontario Organizational Development Program, and funding to bring people from our broad geographic region to planning meetings. We anticipate that the Northwestern Ontario "Local Planning Initiative" will be launched in summer (June) and may take up to a year to complete.

Closer to home, within our own agency, we are involved in immediate planning that will affect changes on our Board of Directors. Simultaneously, after many rich and valuable years of service to ATB, both our President, Carl Triskle and Vice-President, Don Uhryniw, are leaving Thunder Bay to accept employment elsewhere. The Board itself will meet to consider these changes of our Executive Officers. Our Nominating Committee will meet to address the board vacancies. We ask for your help and support during this period of transition, while assuring you that we will continue to deliver our programs and services to the high standards you have become accustomed to. Should you have any questions about these changes - or to offer your help - please don't hesitate to contact us at 345-1516 or info@aidsthunderbay.org.

Michael Sobota, Executive Director

Fundraising News

E-Fundraising!

AIDS Thunder Bay takes the plunge into e-commerce & charitable giving.

Online donations can be made to AIDS Thunder Bay through CanadaHelps.org. CanadaHelps.org (CHO) is a not-for-profit charity portal that serves as an information resource about charities in Canada and seeks to promote and facilitate philanthropy through online giving at no cost to the charity or the donor.

All our donor has to do is click the 'donate' button on our website (www.aidsthunderbay.org) and follow the simple instructions. You will be asked to enter your name and mailing information, email address, some directional details about the donation you are making and your credit card/online banking information. The information entered is strictly confidential, and donor information is only provided to AIDS Thunder Bay. All information is securely protected behind multiple security measures. CanadaHelps.org has worked extensively with a number of major technology companies and online security experts to ensure that the site not only meets security requirements, but far exceeds them. Further information about security features can be reviewed on the site.

Donations made through the CanadaHelps.org website are treated by the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) in the same way as regular donations. Within minutes of making a donation, you will receive an electronic tax receipt mailed to the email address you provided in the donation process. You can save and print this receipt at any time to use for income tax purposes. Because CanadaHelps.org is a charity, you will be receipted for your donation by CanadaHelps.org and not AIDS Thunder Bay.



Partnerships at Work—Macs Milk Break Open Ticket Outlet

Break Open Tickets (BOT), otherwise known as Nevada Tickets, are just one form of gaming that raises funds for AIDS Thunder Bay. As with all fundraising activity, it is extremely difficult to compete with the numerous charities in need of assistance, and even more difficult for businesses to choose which ones to support. AIDS Thunder Bay is very lucky to be working the Mac's Milk located on the corner of River and Cumberland Street on the sale of Nevada's. The funds raised from these sales contribute to the annual fundraising goal to support our programs and services. This year's overall goal is upwards of \$93,000.00



Yard Sale!

4th Annual

June 5th 9am - 1pm
St. John's Anglican Church

If you have items that you no longer have use for, we will gladly recycle them for our sale. Your donation of clean reusable, re-sellable items can help raise funds for direct client programs and services. We appreciate the items that you are able to donate, but reserve the right to not accept items we feel will not sell. Among the items we are unable to accept are: clothing, large appliances, old sports equipment, and used baby furniture.

Shop for bargains galore, but don't forget to explore the variety of scrumptious goodies at the bake table! All home-made treats that will provide you with lots of energy to continuing your yard selling throughout the morning!

Pick ups scheduled three times a week in the mornings of Tuesday, Wednesday, & Friday. Donations will be accepted until June 1st. Call Crystal at 345-1516 ext. 15

AIDS Thunder Bay's AIDS Walk for Life

I walk because...

Share your story &
encourage others to take part!



Why will you walk?

Join the Celebration & "Bring a Friend!"

The Walk is AIDS Thunder Bay's largest fund and awareness raising event. This year we are celebrating the many friendships AIDS Thunder Bay has made through our annual Walk. If everyone that took part in last year's Walk brought one new friend with them this year, we could easily increase our attendance to over 300 people!

The funds that are raised from this event support ATB's Direct Client Services Program. DCS encompasses our Mother's Cupboard Food Bank, Emergency Financial Assistance, transportation support, and child care services. You can double the funds raised and have even more fun by inviting a friend to walk and raise money with you! An increase in walkers that join us means more awareness and funds raised for HIV/AIDS in our community!

Any amount raised is greatly appreciated. Set your goal for this year (and then over-achieve it)! Watch our website for information about new incentives and prizes!

Online registration will be available by June! If you would like to pre-register and have your package mailed to you call Crystal at 345-1516 or send an email with your name and address to cporteous@aidsthunderbay.org

www.aidswalkcanada.ca

Tag Day



AIDS Thunder Bay has been holding tag day events for a number of years. These one-day events scheduled periodically through the year contribute significantly to our annual fundraising goal. The latest was held with the help of 24 volunteers on Easter Saturday at 4 LCBO locations raising over \$2000.00

The success of these events is greatly due to the businesses that let us stand outside their establishments and our volunteers. Our volunteers each give two hours of their time greeting and smiling at many people entering stores. Tag days are usually scheduled around Easter and Mid-November, which means our volunteers endure drizzly, windy spring weather or chilly, possibly snowing weather of November. We can not thank you enough for your dedication (and unwavering smiles) for helping raise funds for our direct client services.

Over the past 3 years, ATB has held 8 tag days all together raising just over \$11,520.00

EDUCATION UPDATE

DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL MARRIAGE

A major factor in the continuing HIV/AIDS epidemic has been stigma and discrimination. The recognition of equal marriage will be an important step in reducing discrimination based on sexual orientation. The upcoming federal election will be important as powerful opponents of equality will try to defeat candidates who support equal marriage.

Focus On The Family launched a \$1.5 million campaign to elect 42 additional anti-gay marriage MPs, and to defeat those supporting equality. Canadians for Equal Marriage responded with a campaign that will help citizens take action to support equality. Canadians can use the ACTION WEBSITE <http://www.equal-marriage.ca> to directly connect with equality-seeking candidates in their area, as well as identify key election battles, no matter where they live in Canada.

Please, ask your friends, family and work-mates to visit www.equal-marriage.ca, and get involved today. It could be the difference between a Parliament that makes Canada a leader in human rights, or a Parliament that starts to take away hard-fought rights. To keep this election from becoming a major setback, the community must become engaged.

Contact information: Canadians for Equal Marriage, 291 Church Street, Toronto, ON, M4Y 2C2 Phone: 416-928-1238 E-mail: canadians@equal-marriage.ca
Web site: www.equal-marriage.ca

PREVENTION OUTREACH

Our prevention outreach project, SCOPE, is now into its final year. Over the past year, SCOPE peers talked to over 1800 people and distributed some 12,000 condom and information packs. In addition a short play was presented at various locations, and a social marketing campaign "Get It On" used transit shelters and bathroom ads to present a prevention message.

This year, peers will use a modified approach, targeting bars with Condom Man and the Condom Crusaders. The initial appearance took place recently at the Apollo Bar during Super Sexy Saturday, an event that featured several local bands and prizes for sexiest costumes. Independently produced, some of the proceeds were donated to AIDS Thunder Bay. After Condom Man introduced the Crusaders, party packs (condom, lube, and info) were distributed and surveys gathered to help us evaluate the project.

Over the coming months, Condom Man and the Crusaders will be busy making appearances at local bars and venues that attract a young crowd. Additional social marketing will be done as well.



ASSUMPTIONS CAMPAIGN

In coming months, AIDS Thunder Bay will be participating in the Assumptions Campaign, a national and provincial initiative aimed at the re-invigoration of HIV prevention for gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men. Over the past few years HIV infection rates among these groups has been rising in certain areas (Toronto and Ottawa, for example). Studies have shown that men may make assumptions about partner's HIV status based on faulty reasoning.

This social marketing campaign will bring the difficult and complex issues of sexual assumptions and silence into the open, and challenge men to look at the assumptions behind their choices about their health and that of their partners.

In Thunder Bay, the public campaign will be something new, an approach made necessary by the fragmented and often invisible nature of the target population.

Although targeting gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men, we feel that the messages will apply to heterosexual men and women as well.

SUPPORT SERVICES/EHOP UPDATE

CLIENT DROP-IN

A drop-in for HIV+ people is scheduled for the third Thursday of each month from 1:00-2:30. Refreshments are provided. Rides are available as well. Come by and chat in an informal setting. For information or to book a ride, call 345-1516 and talk to Carrie, Charlene, Gail or Stuart. Next drop in is May 20th.

Let's Talk Food

What: a community forum on poverty and food

When: September 17 & 18

Where: Lakehead Labour Centre

Who: Thunder Bay Economic Justice Committee & Food Action Network

How much: free

Through workshops and discussions 'Let's talk Food' will focus on increasing peoples' awareness around food and how it gets to their table, celebrating local food producers and educating the public around food and hunger issues.

For more information or to get involved phone Gail at 345-1516 or Kim McGibbon at 525-5991.

Food security means that everyone has access to enough safe, healthy, and affordable food.

EHOP Update....

from Carrie Miller (EHOP Coordinator)

The Enhancing Healthy Options Program has been up and running for six months now. With the help of our community partners we have been offering free weekly complementary therapy sessions such as healing touch to our clients since January. There has been a variety of social activity events such as a Movie Day, ThunderWolves Hockey Game and Bowling Night. Currently we are offering an Anger Management Support Group for men. During the upcoming months there will be a computer training workshop and art therapy workshop. Planning will begin this month for the PHA Retreat that will take place this fall. For those of you who might be interested in joining the PHA Retreat Planning Committee feel free to contact me at 345-1516.

The following article is reproduced from the Maryland Art Therapy Association website (www.marylandata.org) for educational purposes.

This information is presented as a point of interest; it does not necessarily reflect the opinion of AIDS Thunder Bay.

Art Therapy

Art Therapy is the process of creating visual images for the purpose of communicating complex material on a non-verbal level. The completed art product offers a concrete, durable statement from the client. Art therapy's usefulness stems from the inherent healing qualities of the creative process. It is during this process of creating a graphic or sculptural form that conflict is visually expressed, integrated and resolved into the client's personality to assist in favorable changes in living.

Diagnostically, art therapy can be used to assess development and emotional stages of growth. Art therapists look at color choices, spatial organization, specific symbols, and techniques as significant indicators of abuse, emotional state, neurological dysfunction, and psychological disorders for the purpose of planning treatment goals.

As a therapeutic intervention, art therapy can contribute to: alternative coping skills, behavioral changes, emotional release, insight, interpersonal skills, maintaining self awareness, reality orientation, and strengthening defenses. It allows for the escape of uncensored, unconscious material more easily than verbal expressions, so that the therapeutic process is safely accelerated. Art therapy is used with couples, families, groups and individuals. Populations range from children to geriatrics with a variety of needs.

How Art Therapy Is Practiced

Art Therapists make accessible a variety of art materials in a safe environment that is conducive to the creative process. Their main function is to help the client find a comfortable means of expression. Their approach remains flexible, and varies according to the client's needs, the goals of the facility, and the philosophical orientation of the therapists. Their approach can be directive by utilizing specific artistic activities that are aimed at reaching the therapeutic goals. They may also be non-directive, encouraging spontaneous art expression, free association, and obtaining the client's own interpretation of the symbolic designs. The art therapist can be an adjunctive therapist, consultant, or the primary therapist within a variety of treatment settings. They work in: AIDS treatment centers, bereavement centers, counseling centers, hospices, industry, psychiatric and medical facilities, schools, senior centers, sexual assault centers, shelters, and substance abuse/addiction centers.

News from the Volunteer Department

Here's what's happening in the coming months:

**Yard Sale/Bake Sale—June 5*

**Tag Day—August 14*

**AIDS Walk—Sept. 26*

**Tag Day—Nov. 20*

**World AIDS Day—Dec 1*

If you would like to volunteer for any of these events, please call Selly at 345-1516.



Many thanks to all our
VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer Activities

The ATB Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event was held on Thursday, April 22nd. We began with a 'Getting to Know You' bingo and then were entertained with 3 skits about volunteering—the actors were staff members and volunteers. It was a thoroughly enjoyable performance.

In 2003, there were 157 active volunteers at ATB; they gave 6,635 hours to the agency. Certificates and gifts were given to everyone. Five volunteers each gave over 201 hours, they received ATB sweatshirts. Several long-time volunteers were awarded special certificates and pins.

The 2004 ATB Volunteer of the Year is Don Uhryniw. Don has given many hours over the past 10 years. He is a board member and sits on various committees. He is also a regular receptionist and has been involved with our Mother's Cupboard Food Bank as well as volunteering for AIDS Awareness Week activities. Don has helped out in fundraising by working many tag days. He has been very generous with his time and we really appreciate all he has done. Thank you so much, Don!

Thank you to the many volunteers who came out on Easter Weekend and gave us their time at a spring tag day. They raised \$2,032!

Our annual Yard Sale will be on June 5 this year. We are looking for volunteers to help with set-up on the 4th and to work at the sale on the 5th. We are also looking for donations for a Bake Sale table. If you can help with the yard sale or contribute something to the bake sale table, please call Selly at 345-1516, ext. 12.

We will be having a 'mini' Tag Day on Saturday, August 14th. There will be only 2 locations. If you can volunteer for a 2-hour shift, call Selly.

The annual AIDS Walk will be on Sunday, September 26th. Sign up to walk and/or volunteer. You can do both as most volunteering takes place before the walk begins or at the end of the day.

Thank you to all our volunteers for all you have done for ATB. We really appreciate it!

Here and There...

Front Line Newsletter

We are now posting our **newsletter online**. It is in Adobe PDF format so it can be read online or printed out. If you are now receiving our newsletter by snail mail and you have an email address, **PLEASE send us your email address** so we can add you to the email newsletter list. This will help reduce costs and allow us to keep producing the newsletter. Send your email address to info@aidsthunderbay.org

Have You Purchased Your ATB Membership?

Is your membership up-to-date? If you would like to renew or purchase a membership, please fill out this form and mail or fax it to:

AIDS Thunder Bay
P.O. Box 24025
Thunder Bay, ON P7A 8A9
Phone #: 345-1516 Fax #: 345-2505

Or, bring your completed form into the office at 217 S. Algoma St., Thunder Bay, Ontario

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

Phone #: (Work) _____ (Home) _____

When calling, would you prefer us to use discretion?
Yes _____ No _____

Would you like to receive information by email?
Yes _____ No _____

Email address: _____

This information may be used in future to contact you about fundraising/special events. Please note, AIDS Thunder Bay does not exchange mailing lists. All lists are confidential.

Basic membership \$10.00 ☐

Supporting membership \$25.00 ☐

I would also like to donate \$ _____ ☐

Suggestions? Compliments? Feedback?

ATB has a "suggestion box". We invite your comments or suggestions about any aspect of our agency or services. The box is located near our reception area. You may offer suggestions anonymously—however, if you are asking for a response back to you, we need your name and phone number.

We hope the suggestion box will be used with a sense of good will and a spirit of support and encouragement. That's how we offer it to you.

For Information -

About AIDS or HIV Infection:

Call the AIDS Hotline at 1-800-668-2437

About Superior Points:

Call 624-2005, 625-8830 or 625-8831

About Anonymous HIV Testing in Thunder Bay

Call 625-5981 or 624-2000

About Regular HIV Testing

Call the Sexual Health Clinics 625-5976 or 624-2000

About Counselling or Referrals

Call AIDS Thunder Bay 345-1516

About HIV/AIDS Treatment Information

Call Catie (Community AIDS Treatment Information Exchange) 1-800-263-1638

Service bilingue disponible **ALL CALLS CONFIDENTIAL**
Monday to Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Eastern Time)

CATIE

Community AIDS Treatment Information Exchange

1-800-263-1638

HIV/AIDS Treatment Information

email: info@catie.ca

internet: www.catie.ca

The opinions and medical information offered by "Front Line" are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the staff and Board of Directors of AIDS Thunder Bay. Medical information offered should be used at your own discretion. Please consult your doctor.

Please address any comments or concerns to:

Front Line
P.O. Box 24025
Thunder Bay, ON P7A 8A9

Or, e-mail us at: info@aidsthunderbay.org
Visit us on the internet at: www.aidsthunderbay.org

Attention all clients, volunteers and visitors to the AIDS Thunder Bay office. We are a 'scent-free' building. Please do not wear colognes, perfumes, aftershave, or scented makeup or hairspray when visiting our premises. They have been known to cause allergic reactions for staff, clients and volunteers. Some scented fabric softeners have also caused reactions.

Parting Glance

AIDS Thunder Bay would like to acknowledge the **United Way of Thunder Bay** for supporting our Emergency Financial Assistance Program. This is a wonderful community partnership that in turn will directly help people with HIV/AIDS and their families.

Frequently Asked Questions About HIV/AIDS

Question #7 What are the risks of getting HIV when you drink or use drugs?

Alcohol or drugs won't infect you with HIV. But taking risks while you're drunk or high might.

When you drink or use drugs, it's easy to get reckless and not bother to use a condom during sex. Having unprotected sex is one of the most common ways to become infected with HIV.

You might take the risk of sharing a needle. In 1996, about half of all new HIV infections occurred among people who inject street drugs. Whenever anyone shoots up, a tiny amount of their blood stays in the needle or syringe. If you use the same needle as someone who is infected with HIV, you shoot their infected blood into your bloodstream.

Reduce your risk of HIV infection:

- Limit drinking or drug taking before sex. This way you are more likely to take precautions.
- If you are going to be drinking or taking drugs, get condoms or clean needles to bring with you before you go out (free condoms and needles can often be obtained through your public health department).
- Don't have unprotected sex.
- Don't share any equipment that could have blood in it (for example, water, cotton filters, cookers, pipes, straws, needles, syringes).
- Consider cutting down on the drugs you use or getting treated for addiction.

If you must re-use drug-injecting equipment, here's how to kill HIV with bleach between users:

1. Draw clean water into the needle and syringe. Shake it. Squirt it out. Throw the water away.
2. Draw in full-strength bleach. Leave it for 30 seconds. Squirt it out. Throw the bleach away. Do this twice.
3. Draw more clean water into the needle and syringe. Shake it. Squirt it out. Throw the water away. Do this twice.

This is one of a series of fact sheets developed to answer frequently asked questions from clients of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse in 1999. This material was originally produced for the Canadian Health Network

CLGRO

Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario
Box 822 Station A, Toronto Ont. M5W 1G3 Canada
phone 416-405-8253

www.web.ca/clgro clgro@web.ca

Contact us. Work with us. Join us.

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Richard Thompson
Nicky Tittley

Rev. Don Uhryniw
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ATB staff & volunteers

Editor

AIDS Thunder Bay acknowledges and thanks our various funders:

- ♦ Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care - AIDS Bureau
- ♦ Health Promotion and Programs Branch, Health Canada (ACAP)
- ♦ John Andrews Foundation
- ♦ N.M. Paterson Foundation
- ♦ Elton John Foundation
- ♦ Fort William Rotary Club
- ♦ United Way

And all of the people involved in general fundraising and the support of many local businesses and individuals

A Word or Two....

from the Health Promoter

Charlene Burford

The following articles were reproduced with permission from "The Circle of Hope" Newsletter, Special Edition 2004; The First Nations and Inuit of Quebec HIV and AIDS Strategy

CHLAMYDIA

Chlamydia (pronounced kla-mid-ee-ah) is a very common bacterial sexually transmitted infection- and one of the more serious.

It can spread silently in females and cause a painful, long-term condition called PID (pelvic inflammatory disease) and infertility (the inability to have children). Pregnant women can pass this infection on to their babies at birth, who can then get infections of their eyes or lungs.

You can get chlamydia from oral, vaginal or anal sex.

The symptoms and signs

A woman may never know she is infected with chlamydia until she has a test for it or decides to have a baby and has problems trying to become pregnant.

For those who develop symptoms, they usually appear one to three weeks after sex with an infected person.

Sometimes, the symptoms are so mild that a person may not notice them. Men often have no symptoms and can spread the infection without knowing they have it. It is very important that chlamydia be treated right away.

What to look for

Females:

- a new or different discharge from the vagina
- a burning feeling when urinating
- pain in the lower abdomen, sometimes with fever and chills
- pain during sex
- vaginal bleeding between periods
- vaginal bleeding after intercourse

Males:

- a watery or milky drip from the penis
- an itchy feeling inside the penis
- a burning feeling when urinating
- pain or swelling in the testicles

A quick and reliable urine test is available for chlamydia in most centres for both men and women. If you are having sex and have taken chances, see a health professional or go to a clinic and ask to be tested.

How chlamydia is treated

Chlamydia can often be treated with just one dose of antibiotics taken by mouth. But you can get it again right away from your partner if he/she isn't treated as well.

You must get a prescription for the right antibiotic from your doctor. Don't borrow medicine from your friends, and you cannot buy the medicine on the street.

Treatment is important

Your doctor or nurse may ask you for the name of your partner or ask you to tell your partner so that this STI will not be spread further. Make sure you take your medication until it is finished. Ask your doctor or nurse how soon after treatment you can have sexual intercourse. If you are a female with chlamydia and you don't get treated, this could happen to you:

- you might develop a pain in your abdomen or belly that never seems to go away
- the infection could spread to all your reproductive organs and cause PID
- you may have problems later in life getting pregnant or during your pregnancy.

The long-term effects of chlamydia on males are not well known.

Source: Health Canada, What you need to know about STI – Sexually Transmitted Infections, 2002

Number of infections due to Chlamydia

Genital chlamydiosis is the most common STI for which reporting is mandatory. In 2002, there were 11,131 reported cases in Quebec. Most of the reported cases involved women (72 %). Over 70% of these cases were reported among young people between 15 and 24 years old. After an important decline until the mid-nineties, the number of reported cases increased by 54 %, between 1998 and 2002. The increase was noted for men and women and for all age groups under 60 years old. All regions in Quebec are affected by genital chlamydiosis. In most regions the incidence rate is comparable to general rate in Quebec i.e., 144.3 cases out of 100,000 people in 2002 with the exception of Nunavik and the Cree Territories in the James-Bay Region, where the rate is five to twenty times higher than in the rest of Quebec. The improvement of detection methods for chlamydiosis isn't the only explanation for the increase of reported cases. It can also be explained by high risk sexual practices; this hypothesis is all the more plausible because of the increase of other STI.

Source: Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux du Québec. Portrait des infections transmissibles sexuellement et par le sang (ITSS), de l'hépatite C, de l'infection par le VIH et du sida au Québec– Décembre 2003

GONORRHEA

You may have heard of this STI by other names such as “the clap” or “a dose.” Gonorrhea is a common STI which, if not treated early, can cause serious health problems, especially for women. Gonorrhea in women left untreated could lead to a painful, long-term condition called PID (pelvic inflammatory disease) and infertility (the inability to have children).

A pregnant woman can pass gonorrhea to her baby during birth, and cause a serious eye infection or blindness.

You can get gonorrhea from oral, vaginal and anal sex.

The symptoms and signs

If you catch gonorrhea from having sex with an infected partner, you might not notice any symptoms. If you do, they will appear three to five days after sex.

Even if you don't have symptoms, you can have gonorrhea and you can pass it on to others.

What to look for

Females:

- new or different discharge from the vagina
- a burning feeling when urinating
- pain in the lower abdomen
- fever and chills
- pain during sex
- vaginal bleeding between periods
- vaginal bleeding after intercourse
- possible rectal pain
- rectal discharge

Males:

- discharge from the penis, may be thick and yellow-green in colour
- burning feeling when urinating
- pain or swelling in the testicles
- possible rectal pain
- rectal discharge

To test for gonorrhea, a swab of the area is usually taken or a new urine test may be used at some centres.

How gonorrhea is treated

Gonorrhea can often be treated with just one dose of antibiotics taken by mouth and can be cured. But you can get it again right away from your partner if he/she isn't treated as well. See a doctor or go to a clinic and, if you have gonorrhea, tell your partner.

Source: Health Canada, What you need to know about STI _ Sexually Transmitted Infections, 2002

Number of infections due to gonorrhoea

The statistics for gonorrhoea are somewhat different than those for Chlamydia: there are fewer cases (880 cases in 2002); more men affected (76% of the cases 2002); 40% of the cases were reported among people aged between 15 and 24 years old and 42 % of the cases were reported among adults between 25 and 40 years old. The incidence rate (number of cases per 100,000 people) is higher among young men aged between 20 and 24 years old, a percentage rate that is five times higher than for the general population (58.9 compared to 11.4). In fact, the incidence rate for gonococcal disease is systematically higher for men than for women, except for the 15 to 19 year olds, where young girls represent a higher rate.

Furthermore, the distribution of cases isn't proportional in all the regions: 60 % of the cases are declared in the Montreal Region and 15 % in the adjoining regions of Laval and Montérégie. The incidence rate for men aged between 15 and 24 years old is thus twice as high as the one for the entire region.

The incidence rate for gonococcal disease decreased every year as of the early eighties but this trend does not apply anymore. The number of reported cases went from 495 in 1998 to 880 in 2002 and during the same period, the incidence rate increased by 72 %, rising from 6.6 in 1998 to 11.4 in 2002. Information has shown that 60 % of the reported cases in 2001 and 2002 involved men having sex with other men (MHSWM). The overstatement for this population group is quite high, compared to what would be expected in terms of its proportion in the general population (probably between 5 and 10 %). The figures for Quebec are however comparable to the figures reported around the world for gonococcal disease among MHSWM.

Source : Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux du Québec. Portrait des infections transmissibles sexuellement et par le sang (ITSS), de l'hépatite C, de l'infection par le VIH et du sida au Québec - Décembre 2003

Visit: First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission -- www.cssspnql.com for a look at their complete newsletter.

HEPATITIS C — IT'S SERIOUS. YOU CAN HAVE IT AND NOT KNOW IT.

Get the facts. For more information, visit

www.healthcanada.ca/hepc