

<p><b>IN THIS ISSUE:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-collected pharyngeal and rectal swabs for <i>Chlamydia trachomatis</i> and <i>Neisseria gonorrhoeae</i> testing</li> <li>Syphilis screening updates for non-pregnant adults and adolescents</li> <li>GetaKit sexually transmitted and blood-borne infection testing</li> </ul>	<p><b>FROM:</b> Gayane Hovhannisyan, MD, MPH, PhD, FRCPC Associate Medical Officer of Health</p>
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<p><b>Key Messages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At-home patient/self-collected rectal and pharyngeal swabs are now accepted by Public Health Ontario laboratories for <i>Chlamydia trachomatis</i> and <i>Neisseria gonorrhoeae</i> nucleic acid amplification (NAAT) testing.</li> <li>Syphilis screening is recommended in all sexually active individuals with new or multiple partners and/or upon request.</li> <li>Targeted opt-out syphilis screening programs should be considered for high-risk groups.</li> <li>STBBI testing is available to Peel residents through GetaKit.</li> </ul>
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As a reminder, NAAT is the recommended method for screening or testing for CT and GC infections. In addition to NAAT, GC culture is recommended in cases where antimicrobial resistance is suspected, for test-of-cure, in symptomatic patients, in cases of pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), during pregnancy, and in evaluation of individuals suspected of experiencing sexual abuse or assault.

Further information available from PHO’s resource [CT/GC – NAAT](#).

**Syphilis screening updates for non-pregnant adults and adolescents**

Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) updated syphilis testing recommendations for healthcare professionals:

- Sexually active adults and adolescents:** Syphilis screening is recommended in all sexually active persons with a new or multiple partners and/or upon request of the individual. For individuals with multiple partners, it is recommended to screen every three to six months.
- High prevalence groups/communities:** Targeted opt-out screening programs should be considered as frequently as every three months when serving population groups and/or communities experiencing high prevalence of syphilis (and other STBBI), such as gbMSM, people living with HIV, people who are or have been incarcerated, people who use substances and/or access addiction services and/or some Indigenous communities.

**Self-collected pharyngeal and rectal swabs for *Chlamydia trachomatis* (CT) and *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* (GC) NAAT testing**

At-home patient/self-collected rectal and pharyngeal swabs are now accepted by Public Health Ontario (PHO) for testing.

Rectal and/or pharyngeal testing is recommended for individuals who have had unprotected sexual exposures at these sites, and are in specific at-risk groups or have risk factors including individuals who:

- identify as gay, bisexual, and men who have sex with men (gbMSM), including trans women,
- are engaged in or have had contact with someone engaging in sex work,
- are a known contact of those infected with CT or GC, and or
- have signs or symptoms of rectal or pharyngeal infection.

Further details on Syphilis screening, diagnosis and treatment can be found through the [Canadian Guidelines on Sexually Transmitted Infections](#). See PHAC's [Let's Talk About Syphilis](#) for tips on screening and management of syphilis.

### **GetaKit sexually transmitted and blood-borne infection testing**

GetaKit is a research study from the University of Ottawa, undertaken in partnership with local public health units in Ontario.

GetaKit STBBI testing is now available to Peel residents, offering no-cost at-home HIV self-tests and lab-based testing for HIV, syphilis, hepatitis C, gonorrhoea, and chlamydia. This service is free for eligible Peel residents with private and public health insurance. Clients without health insurance can opt to pay for the testing at the lab. After completing an online self-assessment, clients can order their tests and requisitions, including self-collected rectal and pharyngeal swabs. Self-HIV test kits, swabs, and requisitions will be mailed upon request, or lab requisitions can be accessed online. Results will be available on the [GetaKit](#) website.