Syphilis Is on the Rise Among Gay and Bi Men in Vancouver, BC

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Syphilis rates have been increasing in Vancouver, British Columbia, especially among men who have sex with men (MSM), The Globe and Mail reports. A total of 561 new cases were reported in 2013, the highest rate in 32 years. Eighty-six percent of the cases were among gay and bisexual men.

Vancouver syphilis rates began to rise in the early to mid-2000s but then dropped in 2007, only to spike again in 2010.

Those at highest risk of syphilis in Vancouver are MSM who have sex with more than one partner at a time. Men between the ages of 30 and 49 have the highest rates of infection. All age groups of men are seeing increases.

A 2010 Public Health Agency of Canada report found that syphilis rates were dropping in the general population but have been soaring among men since 2001. Just as in the United States and Europe, the highest rates on the national scale are among MSM.

Vancouver health officials urge MSM to test for syphilis every three to six months.

To read the Globe and Mail story, click here.

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