

Infectious Syphilis Outbreak in British Columbia

The Epidemiology

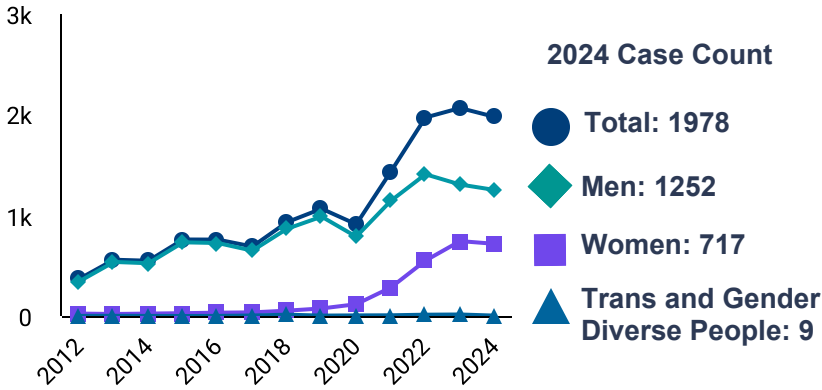


Syphilis has been rising in BC since 2014. In 2019, BC declared a syphilis outbreak. Rates doubled between 2020 and 2022, and remain high.

Congenital syphilis has returned to BC. There were no congenital cases from 2013 to 2018, then five cases in 2019 and 27 cases in 2024.

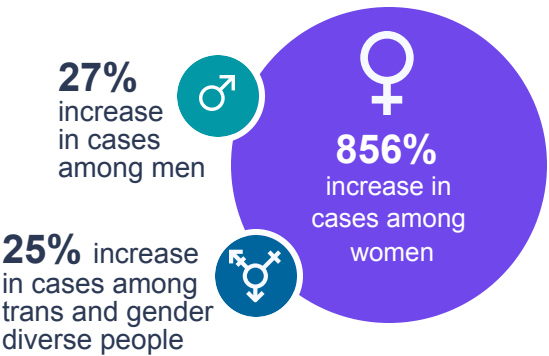


Syphilis Case Counts by Gender

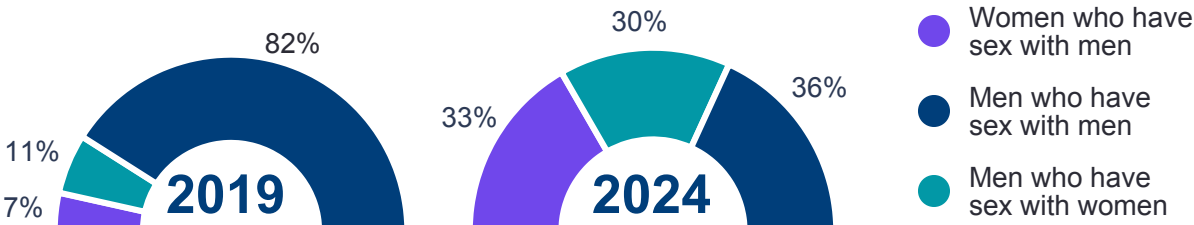


Syphilis increased the most among women, specifically women who have sex with men

Increase of Cases by Gender from 2019 to 2024

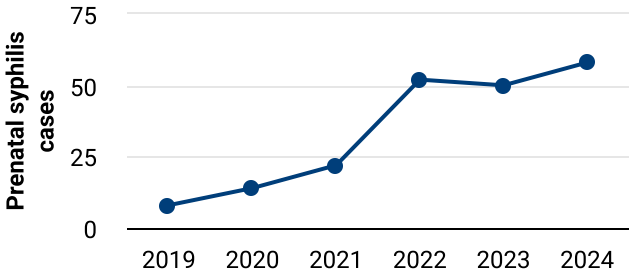


Gender of Case & Gender of Partner



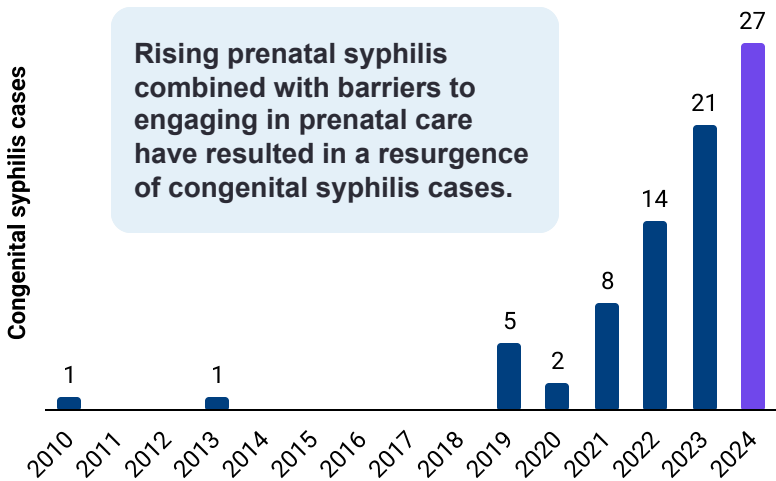
Between 2019 and 2024, the proportion of cases that are women who have sex with men increased almost 400% while the proportion of cases that are men who have sex with women almost tripled.

Syphilis cases among pregnant people have increased



As syphilis cases rose among women, there was also a notable rise among pregnant people.

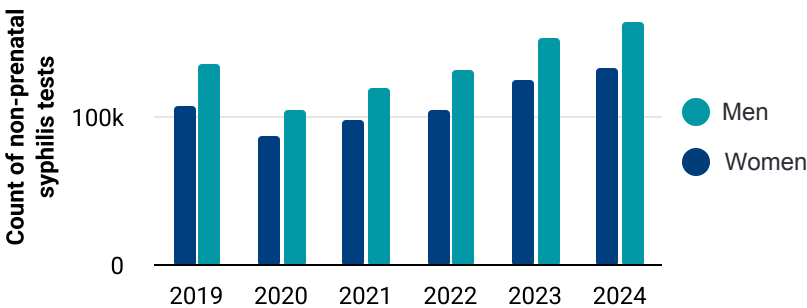
Congenital syphilis continues to rise



Rising prenatal syphilis combined with barriers to engaging in prenatal care have resulted in a resurgence of congenital syphilis cases.



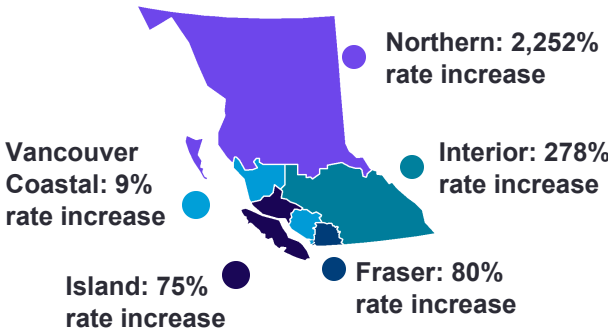
Total test counts are back up



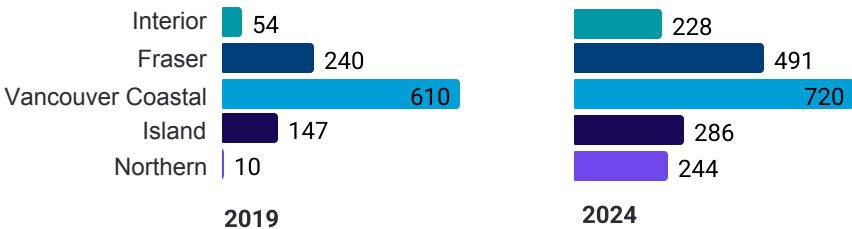
Syphilis tests conducted per year are now higher than they were when the outbreak was first declared. Early diagnosis and treatment helps prevent transmission.

Syphilis rates increased the most in Northern Health and Interior Health

Between 2019 and 2024, rates of syphilis increased 67% in BC. Syphilis rates increased by over 2,000% in Northern Health and 278% in Interior Health.



Syphilis Case Counts by Health Authority, 2019 and 2024



Public health is responding to the syphilis outbreak



Increasing access to testing and treatment.



Expanding syphilis screening to certain acute care settings.



Increasing education and support for healthcare professionals.



Adding a third trimester syphilis test to prenatal care.

