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Sexual Health

Over the past decade, years of community education paid off as habits changed and rates of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV infections declined substantially in our community. Recent studies indicate that unsafe sex practices have increased — perhaps spurred by drug use — and resulted in an alarming rise in STD rates among gay men in some cities.

**THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT HIV AND STDs ARE PREVENTABLE.
HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PROTECT YOUR SEXUAL HEALTH:**

- **Test regularly for STDs.** If you're sexually active, you should be tested annually for HIV, syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia. Test more frequently if you bottom, have multiple partners or party.
- **Get vaccinated for Hepatitis A and B.** It's one of the most effective things that you can do to protect your health.
- **Play Safe!** Use a condom or a dental dam. When used consistently and correctly, they are extremely effective in preventing many STDs and HIV.
- **Get an anal Pap smear.** If you have ever had unprotected anal sex, you may have developed anal warts that can cause colorectal cancer. A Pap smear is simple and painless. Talk to your doc.
- **Find an LGBT-friendly provider.** Ask your friends, call your local LGBT community center to inquire about referrals, or log onto services such as www.gayhealth.com to research in greater detail.
- **Consider coming out to your doctor.** It's the most effective way to make certain your health concerns are addressed completely. If your provider isn't friendly, visit www.gima.org to find one that is.

remember, sexual health is for life.



A PROJECT OF:
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LGBT HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK
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