



Caddo County Health Department

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Valentine's Day to Kickoff National Condom Week

Buying flowers or candy for your Valentine? How about condoms?

Valentine's Day is also National Condom Day, and is the first day of National Condom Week (Feb. 14-21). The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) shares the primary goal of National Condom Day in promoting safe sex and normalizing the use of condoms.

National Condom Day began in the late 1980s and is recognized on Valentine's Day because studies indicate condom sales are 25 percent higher compared to other days of the year. Of all birth control methods available, the condom is the only option to also protect against the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) such as HIV, gonorrhea, chlamydia and syphilis.

Oklahoma continues to see a steady increase in STDs. In 2016, the OSDH reported more than 21,000 cases of chlamydia, more than 7,500 cases of gonorrhea, nearly 6,000 cases of HIV/AIDS, and nearly 700 cases of syphilis.

Jan Fox, director of the OSDH HIV/STD Service, said the primary purpose of promoting National Condom Day is to educate the public about the need for practicing safe sex at all times. Studies indicate people are more likely to use condoms if they are available prior to a sexual encounter.

"We want more people to be comfortable with purchasing, carrying, talking about, and using condoms," said Fox. "We hope that one day, buying condoms at the store will feel as normal as buying a gallon of milk."

The OSDH partners with community-based organizations throughout the state who provide condoms and lubricant, along with additional materials, throughout the year. County health department sites across the state also offer condoms. These sites can also offer important guidance and information about the proper use of condoms.

The Caddo County Health Department offers confidential STD testing and treatment services. The Health Department staff will also provide STD counseling and education as well as condoms to those who receive testing and treatment services. No appointment is required to receive STD services but it is recommended that you call the Caddo County Health Department at (405)247-2507 to confirm that appropriate staff is available to meet your testing and treatment needs. Condoms are available on request at the check-in counter to anyone without the need to check in or be tested. We want to encourage anyone (no matter their age) who feels the need to receive condoms or STD testing to come to the Health Department and allow us to assist them.

For more information about condoms and preventing STDs, visit www.hivstd.health.ok.gov or www.cdc.gov. Media inquiries should be directed to Jamie Dukes at (405) 271-5601 or jamied@health.ok.gov.

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