

**February 9, 2017**

## **MCHD to observe National Condom Week with special events**

MOBILE, Alabama — National Condom Week will be observed from Feb. 13-17. Originally started on the campus of the University of California-Berkeley, it has grown into an educational event for high schools, colleges, family planning organizations, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) awareness groups, pharmacies and condom manufacturers.

In acknowledgement of this event, various activities and services are being planned by the Mobile County Health Department. Free condoms are available from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. — featuring education and demonstration — in Building 4 at the MCHD’s Keeler Compound located on 251 N. Bayou Street in Downtown Mobile. STD testing is available weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. at Keeler’s Urgent Care. For details on the testing, please call 251-690-8153.

There will be an outreach Feb. 14 at the University of South Alabama’s Student Center from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. On Feb. 16, AIDS Alabama South is offering rapid human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) testing to help “Know Your Status” at 2054 Dauphin Street from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

MCHD created an online campaign that will appear through social media at the health department’s websites, such as Facebook.com/ILoveMCHD. The list of daily announcements is as follows:

**Feb. 13 – ’Twas the night before Valentine’s Day.** Fast facts: Always check the expiration date on the packaging. Keep condoms in a cool, dry place. Remember, heat can damage them.

**Feb. 14 -- Protect your love.** Fast facts: Only latex and polyurethane condoms protect against Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) and HIV.

**Feb. 15 -- Let’s wait a while.** Fast facts: Abstinence and all types of condoms lower the risk of pregnancy.

**Feb. 16 -- Know your STD status.** Fast facts: You can often get condoms free. Ask at STI/STD/HIV events, testing centers and family planning health centers.

**Feb. 17 -- Use condom sense.** Fast facts: Be careful about mixing alcohol or other drug use with sex. Studies show that being drunk or high can make it harder to use a condom the right way.

Each announcement will include the phone number for the STD division (251-690-8831) at MCHD and a link to information from the Centers of Disease Control & Prevention about the use of condoms ([www.cdc.gov/condomeffectiveness/docs/condomfactsheetinbrief.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/condomeffectiveness/docs/condomfactsheetinbrief.pdf)).

While humor is often used to help provide education, National Condom Month has become a tool to help teach young adults about serious risks involved with unprotected sex. This includes the risk of catching and spreading sexually transmitted diseases including AIDS as well as helping to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

According to the CDC, correctly using male condoms and other barriers like female condoms and dental dams, every time, can reduce (though not eliminate) the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and viral hepatitis. They can also provide protection against other diseases that may be transmitted through sex like Zika. Using male and female condoms correctly, every time, can also help prevent pregnancy.