

Sexually transmitted diseases on the rise

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April Is STD Awareness Month—Protect Your Health: Talk. Test. Treat

SPRINGFIELD - Every year there are an estimated 20 million new sexually transmitted disease (STD) infections in the U.S. Nationally, recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data show cases of three reported STDs—chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis—all increased for the first time since 2006. In Illinois, the number of chlamydia and syphilis cases increased in 2014 from the previous year, while gonorrhea cases decreased. There were more than 66,500 chlamydia cases, almost 16,000 gonorrhea cases, and approximately 1,680 syphilis cases in 2014 in Illinois.

“Any increase in STDs, especially in young people, is concerning,” said IDPH Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. “While chlamydia and gonorrhea infections may not cause any symptoms, undiagnosed infections could lead to lifelong consequences, especially in women, such as pelvic inflammatory disease and infertility.”

Similar to the U.S., half of the STDs cases in Illinois are in people under 25 years of age. Young people ages 15-24, gay, bisexual, men who have sex with men, and some minority groups have a higher risk of becoming infected with an STD. Behavioral factors, such as not using condoms, contribute to the increased risk in these groups. In addition, difficulty accessing quality health care also contributes to the higher STD burden among these groups.

STDs are preventable. Effective strategies for reducing STD risk include:

- Abstinence - The most reliable way to avoid infection is to not have sex (anal, vaginal or oral).
- Reduce the number of sexual partners – Reducing your number of partners can decrease your risk for STDs.
- Use condoms – Correct and consistent use of the male latex condom is highly effective in reducing STD transmission. Use a condom every time you have anal, vaginal, or oral sex.
- Mutual monogamy – Mutual monogamy means that you agree to be sexually active with only one person, who has agreed to be sexually active only with you.
- Vaccination - Vaccines are safe, effective, and recommended ways to prevent hepatitis B and HPV.

Take three simple actions to protect your health: Talk. Test. Treat.

- Talk - Talk openly and honestly to your partner(s) and your health care provider about sexual health and STDs.
- Test - Testing is the only way to know for sure if you have an STD.
- Treat - If you test positive for an STD, work with your doctor to get the correct treatment.

To find a testing site near you go to: <https://gettested.cdc.gov/>.

For more information on STDs go to: www.cdc.gov/std/.

Year	Chlamydia	Early Syphilis	Gonorrhea
2014	66,593	1,682	15,971
2013	63,797	1,607	16,464
2012	67,701	1,500	18,149
2011	64,939	1,462	17,037
2010	60,672	1,410	15,777
2009	60,542	1,094	19,962
2008	59,169	825	20,674
2007	55,470	688	20,813
2006	53,586	698	20,186
2005	50,559	922	20,019
2004	47,185	708	20,597
2003	48,294	724	21,817
2002	48,101	1,007	24,026
2001	43,716	795	24,025
2000	40,350	794	24,812