

Reported STDs in the United States

2015 National Data for Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, and Syphilis

This fact sheet summarizes 2015 data on chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis published in CDC's annual report, *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance, 2015* (available at www.cdc.gov/std/stats). The data are based on state and local STD case reports from a variety of private and public sources.

Many cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis continue to go undiagnosed and unreported, and data on several additional STDs — such as human papillomavirus, herpes simplex virus, and trichomoniasis — are not routinely reported to CDC. As a result, the annual surveillance report captures only a fraction of the true burden of STDs in America. However, it provides important insights into the scope, distribution, and trends in STD diagnoses in the country.

STDs are a substantial health challenge facing the United States. CDC estimates that nearly 20 million new sexually transmitted infections occur every year in this country, half among young people aged 15–24, and account for almost \$16 billion in health care costs. Each of these infections is a potential threat to an individual's immediate and long-term health and well-being. In addition to increasing a person's risk for acquiring and transmitting HIV infection, STDs can lead to chronic pain and severe reproductive health complications, such as infertility and ectopic pregnancy.

Snapshot: STDs in the United States, 2015

Despite recent declines, 2015 was the second year in a row in which increases were seen in all three nationally reported STDs. The approximately 1.5 million cases of chlamydia represent the highest number of annual cases of any condition ever reported to CDC. Substantial increases were also seen among reported cases of gonorrhea and syphilis. While young people and women are most severely affected by STDs, increasing rates among men contributed to the overall increase in 2015 across all diseases.

Chlamydia

- Cases reported in 2015: 1,526,658
- Rate per 100,000 people: 479; increase of 6% since 2014

Gonorrhea

- Cases reported in 2015: 395,216
- Rate per 100,000 people: 124; increase of 13% since 2014

Syphilis (primary and secondary)

- Cases reported in 2015: 23,872
- Rate per 100,000 people: 8; 19% increase since 2014

Syphilis (congenital)

- Cases reported in 2015: 487
- Rate per 100,000 live births: 12; 6% increase since 2014



Some Groups Bear a Disproportionate Burden of STDs

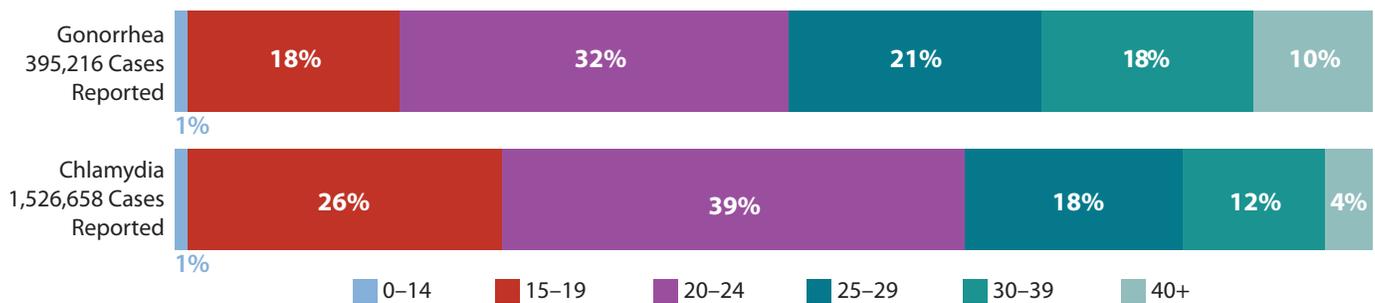
While anyone can become infected with an STD, certain groups, including young people and gay and bisexual men, are at greatest risk.

Gonorrhea and chlamydia primarily affect young people

Surveillance data show both the numbers and rates of reported cases of chlamydia and gonorrhea continue to be highest among young people aged 15-24.

Both young men and young women are heavily affected by STDs — but young women face the most serious long-term health consequences. It is estimated that undiagnosed STDs cause infertility in more than 20,000 women each year.

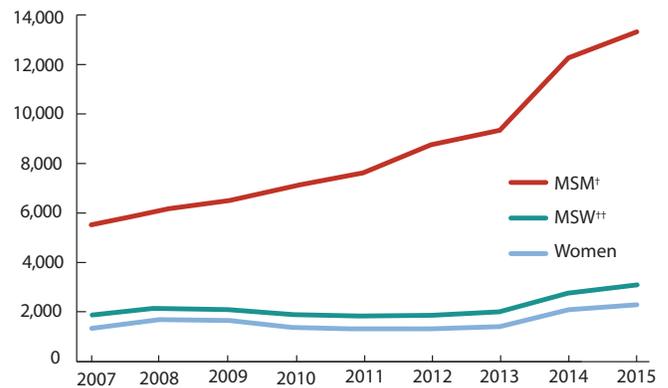
Most Reported Chlamydia and Gonorrhea Infections Occur among 15–24-Year-Olds



Troubling rise in syphilis infections among men, particularly gay and bisexual men

Trend data show rates of syphilis are increasing at an alarming rate (19 percent in 2015). While rates have increased among both men and women, men account for more than 90 percent of all primary and secondary syphilis cases. Men who have sex with men (MSM)* account for 82 percent of male cases where the sex of the sex partner is known. Primary and secondary syphilis are the most infectious stages of the disease, and if not adequately treated, can lead to long-term infection which can cause visual impairment and stroke. Syphilis infection can also place a person at increased risk for acquiring or transmitting HIV infection. Available surveillance data indicate that an average of half of MSM who have syphilis are also infected with HIV.

Gay and Bisexual Men Face Highest – and Rising – Number of Syphilis Infections



† Men who have Sex with Men †† Men who have Sex with Women

Note: Based on available data from states reporting sex of sex partners

Disparities result from a range of factors

A number of individual risk behaviors (such as higher numbers of lifetime sex partners), as well as environmental, social and cultural factors (such as higher prevalence of STDs or difficulty accessing quality health care) contribute to disparities in the sexual health of gay and bisexual men. For example, gay and bisexual men who live in poverty may have trouble accessing and affording quality healthcare, making it difficult to receive STD testing and other prevention services. Additionally, complex issues like homophobia and stigma can also make it difficult for gay and bisexual men to find culturally-sensitive and appropriate care and treatment.

* The term men who have sex with men is used in CDC surveillance systems because it indicates the behaviors that transmit infection, rather than how individuals self-identify in terms of their sexuality.

STD Screening is Critical:

If you are sexually active, be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about STD testing and which tests may be right for you.

Women:

- If you are a sexually active woman younger than 25, or have risk factors such as new or multiple sex partners, you should request annual chlamydia and gonorrhea tests.
- If you are a pregnant woman, you should request syphilis, HIV, chlamydia, and hepatitis B tests early in your pregnancy. If you have new or multiple sex partners, you should also request gonorrhea testing early in pregnancy.

Gay and bisexual men:

- If you are a sexually active man who is gay, bisexual, or has sex with men, you should request tests for syphilis, chlamydia, gonorrhea, and HIV at least once a year. More frequent STD testing is recommended for men at high risk.

Sources:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2015. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2016. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/std/stats>.

If you are a member of the news media, please visit www.cdc.gov/nchstp/Newsroom or contact the News Media Line at CDC's National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention: 404-639-8895 or NCHHSTPMediaTeam@cdc.gov.

Other information requests may be directed to the Division of STD Prevention (www.cdc.gov/std) or the CDC-INFO Contact Center: 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636).