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IDA'S Advice



Approximately 19 million new sexually transmitted infections occur every year in the United States – and almost half of these are among young people aged 15 to 24, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Sexually transmitted diseases (STD) pose a serious public health threat to Americans – particularly young women, African Americans, men who have sex with men (MSM), and individuals living in poverty or who have limited access to healthcare. STDs cost the United States' health care system as much as \$17.0 billion annually.

STDs such as chlamydia and gonorrhea are major causes of infertility among women. These and other common STDs can increase the risk of HIV transmission for both women and men. There are many effective ways to prevent, diagnose, and treat STDs. STD screening and early diagnoses are vital to prevent serious health consequences and increased transmission.

Screening is particularly important since many STDs often have no signs or symptoms. CDC recommends annual chlamydia screening for sexually active women under the age of 26. CDC also recommends that girls and women between the ages of 11 and 26 who have not been previously vaccinated or who have not completed the full series of shots, be fully vaccinated against HPV. For sexually active MSM, CDC recommends annual HIV and syphilis blood testing, annual chlamydia testing, as well as annual gonorrhea testing, with more frequent testing for MSM who engage in high-risk behavior.

Please contact your Primary Care Provider to request screening or to discuss your risks and treatment options.



Go to:

findSTDtest.org

To find an STD testing site near you



April is STD Awareness Month, an annual observance to raise public awareness about the impact of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) on the lives of Americans and the importance of preventing, testing for, and treating STDs. It is an opportunity to normalize routine STD testing and conversations about sexual health. Read more about STD Awareness Month in the [Senate](#) and the [House of Representatives](#) Congressional Resolutions.

In 2008, there were more than 1.5 million total cases of chlamydia and gonorrhea reported to CDC—making them the two most commonly reported infectious diseases in the United States.

- While serious health threats from STDs cross racial and ethnic lines, disparities persist at too high a level.
 - Blacks represent 12 percent of the U.S. population yet account for almost half of all reported chlamydia and syphilis cases and more than 70 percent of all reported gonorrhea cases.
 - New CDC data show that women are more likely to be infected with HSV-2 (also known as herpes) than men. The most affected group is black women.
 - Most STDs have been associated with increased risk of HIV transmission. Blacks accounted for almost half of new HIV infections.

Untreated STDs can lead to serious long-term health consequences, especially for adolescent girls and young women. CDC estimates that undiagnosed and untreated STDs cause at least 24,000 women in the United States each year to become infertile.

Vaccines offer protection against two common sexually transmitted infections: Hepatitis B and Human Papillomavirus (HPV). These vaccines can prevent important health problems, such as liver disease and cervical cancer.

To reduce the impact of STDs, it is important to increase knowledge about sexually transmitted infections and make STD testing a part of routine medical care. Because many STDs have no symptoms, those at risk need to get tested and find out if they are infected.

Chlamydia

Chlamydia is one of the most common STDs, especially among young women. CDC recommends that all sexually active women younger than 26 years of age get tested for Chlamydia once a year. Women who are older than 26 years of age should be tested if they have a new or multiple sex partners.

Getting tested and treated for Chlamydia can reduce new cases of pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) by as much as 60 percent, according to a study in a managed care setting.¹ Women with PID can experience pregnancy complications, infertility, chronic pain, and irreversible damage to their reproductive organs. Reducing the impact of PID among women also requires men to be tested and treated for Chlamydia to reduce new cases. Recent studies have shown that many young women who have been diagnosed with Chlamydia may become re-infected by male partners who have not been diagnosed or treated.

CDC's [Sexually Transmitted Diseases Treatment Guidelines](#) recommends that sex partners of infected patients be treated to prevent re-infection of the patient and transmission of the infection to others, and those with Chlamydia be re-tested for the infection approximately three months after treatment. CDC also recommends that sexually active men who have sex with men (MSM) be tested for chlamydia, as well as syphilis, gonorrhea, and HIV at least annually.

Health care providers should take a sexual health history of their patients and follow up with appropriate counseling, vaccination, testing, and, if needed, treatment for STDs. Increased prevention efforts, including screening, are critical to reducing the serious health consequences of STDs.

What You Can Do

- Talk with your doctor or health care provider about STDs and ask about recommended vaccinations and testing.
- Get tested. Visit www.findSTDtest.org to find STD testing locations near you.
- Talk openly and honestly with your partner about STDs.

