

April is National STD Awareness Month 2012

In Minnesota

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Fact sheet provided by the STD and HIV Section,
Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Prevention and Control Division,
Minnesota Department of Health

Introduction

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) encourages all Minnesotans to learn about sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), one of the state's most persistent health problems, during the observance of National STD Awareness Month. Public awareness and knowledge are critically low around the country and STDs remain at epidemic levels. National STD Awareness Month is a national health observance sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help break the silence and alert everyone to the growing crisis of STDs in America. The American Social Health Association (ASHA) provides estimates on the number of STDs occurring in the U.S.:

- One in two Americans will contract an STD at some point in their lifetimes
- An estimated 65 million Americans are living with a viral STD
- Each year, there are almost 3 million new cases of chlamydia
- One in two sexually active persons will contract an STD by age 25
- One in four teens contract an STD each year
- Less than half of adults ages 18 to 44 have ever been tested for an STD other than HIV
- Over 6 million Americans acquire the virus (HPV) that causes genital warts each year
- An estimated one in five Americans (50 million) have genital herpes; and, about 1.6 million new infections occur each year
- More than \$8 billion is spent each year to diagnose and treat STDs and their complications

Minnesota's Situation

The MDH mainly monitors case reports of STDs that are required, by law, to be reported by physicians and laboratories in Minnesota: chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, chancroid, hepatitis, and HIV. Other common STDs, such as genital herpes and genital warts, are not required to be reported in Minnesota. However, there are periodic studies that the MDH performs that help monitor the non-reportable STDs.

The MDH received 19,547 new case reports of chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis in 2011, indicating a 9% increase compared to 2010.

- 16,898 new **chlamydia** cases were reported in the state in 2011, a 9% increase from 2010. From an all-time low of 115 cases per 100,000 in 1996, the incidence of chlamydia has more than doubled to 319 per 100,000 in 2011. During this time period, the incidence rate more than quadrupled among 30-39 year olds, tripled among males, and more than doubled among females. Geographically, in 2011, the City of Minneapolis continues to have the highest overall incidence rate. The greatest increases in incidence were seen in suburban areas of 15% and Greater Minnesota at 11% in 2011. Racial disparities in chlamydia continue to persist, with incidence among Blacks nearly 11 times higher than among Whites. Incidence rates among American Indians, Hispanics, and Asian/Pacific Islanders were 4.4, 2.7, and 1.9 times higher than the rate among whites, respectively.
- 2,283 new **gonorrhea** cases were reported in the state in 2011, a 6% increase from 2010 (2,119 cases). Teens and young adults account for 65% of all gonorrhea cases. Infection rates remain elevated among communities of color, particularly among Blacks where rates were 26 times higher than Whites. American Indian and Hispanics had rates 6.0 and 2.3 times higher than Whites. The cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul accounted for 51% of all reported cases.
- The resurgence of early **syphilis** among men that began in 2001 continued through 2011. In 2011, there were 260 cases of early syphilis reported compared to 224 early syphilis cases in 2010. Syphilis remains concentrated among males (95% of cases) and 88% of the male cases were among men who have sex with men (MSM). Ninety-one (91) percent of the primary and

secondary syphilis cases occurred among residents of the seven county metropolitan area. Fifty-seven (57) percent of the cases among MSM were co-infected with HIV.

- There were 24 acute symptomatic **hepatitis B** cases reported in 2008.
- In 2010, there were 331 HIV cases reported - one new case every 26 hours. Since MDH began tracking AIDS in 1982 and HIV in 1985, a total of 9,493 cases have been reported and 3,228 people have died. There are an estimated 6,814 people aware of their HIV status currently living in Minnesota. The 2011 HIV year-end report will come out on April 30th.

The Bad News About STDs

Undiagnosed and untreated STDs can lead to lifelong health problems, even death. STDs are linked to or can cause:

- Damage to joints, heart, reproductive organs, and the brain
- Genital (penile in males or cervical in women) or anal cancers in both men and women
- Increased risk of tubal pregnancies which can be fatal
- Infertility (unable to reproduce) in both men and women
- Liver problems and cancer
- Blindness, deafness, birth defects, early delivery or stillborns in infants during pregnancy or childbirth
- Increased risk of transmitting or getting HIV by 3 times compared to someone without an STD

Many STDs have no symptoms or they are too minor to see. Many people are relying on symptoms to appear before they get concerned. The STDs can persist unless detected or treated, even though the symptoms may go away. The only way to know if an STD is present is to get tested. There is no lifelong immunity once a person has had an STD or gets treated. A person can get infected again and again through unprotected sex.

The Good News About STDs

STDs are largely preventable and most STDs are curable or can be controlled to prevent complications. Here are some key points:

- The most reliable way to avoid an STD is to abstain from sex or to be in a long-term, mutually monogamous relationship with an uninfected partner.
- Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, are highly effective in preventing transmission of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. In addition, correct and consistent condom use of latex condoms can reduce the risk of other STDs.
- There are vaccines available to prevent hepatitis A or hepatitis B infections.
- There is a new vaccine for young women and girls (Gardasil® by Merck) that protects against infection by certain strains of the genital wart virus associated with cervical cancer.
- STD testing is available throughout Minnesota at medical clinics, physician offices, family planning clinics, health maintenance organizations and selected community-based organizations: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/dtopics/stds/stdtesting.html>.
- Some STD screening tests (gonorrhea and chlamydia) are simple and only require a urine specimen.
- Free brochures and fact sheets are available online from the MDH web site on the prevention, testing and treatment of STDs: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/std>.
- There is a statewide, toll-free STD hotline in Minnesota that can provide information about STDs and provide locations of sites that provide STD testing services: 1-800-78-FACTS voice/TTY (statewide) or 651-645-9360 (metro area); website: <http://sexualhealthmn.org>.

Minnesota's Response to Reducing STD Occurrence

The MDH has taken the following actions in response to Minnesota's STD situation:

- Four Internet sites have been set-up for obtaining downloadable materials for National STD Awareness Month in April 2011: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/std>; <http://www.health.state.mn.us/sep>; <http://www.WrapTestTreat.com>;

<http://www.StopSyphMN.com>; and, a bilingual English/Spanish site at:
<http://www.NoMasSTDs.com>.

- Targeted chlamydia and gonorrhea screening continues in several locations:
 - Inner city clinics serving neighborhoods in Minneapolis and St. Paul with the highest rates of infection: Hennepin County Public Health (Red Door Services), TAMS, St. Paul Ramsey County Public Health (Clinic 555 Sexual Health Services) and Women’s Family Planning Clinics.
 - To address STDs in youth attending schools in St. Paul, screening is conducted at all Health Start school-based clinics.
 - To address STDs in Greater Minnesota, screening is conducted by Planned Parenthood of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota.
- MDH currently funds approximately 31 community-based programs to deliver outreach, testing, individual counseling, support groups, pharmacy syringe access and disposal, and educational services to targeted at-risk populations.
- The MDH Partner Services Program provides follow-up to sexual partners of HIV, chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis infected persons so they can receive treatment to help prevent further spread and re-infection of the initial patient.
- Since 2002, prevention and awareness efforts were completed in each year to reach men who have sex with men and the health care community about the rise in syphilis cases.
- Beginning in 2005, a Syphilis Elimination Project (SEP) Initiative has been implemented to increase syphilis awareness, screening, testing and treatment efforts to reach those at highest risk of infection. New web pages have been developed on behalf of the SEP at:
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/sep>
- In May 2008, Minnesota pharmacy statutes were amended removing the only known legal barrier to implementing expedited partner therapy (EPT) in Minnesota. When partners are unable or unwilling to get to a clinic, the new law allows physicians to dispense prescriptions or medications for partners through their patients infected with chlamydia or gonorrhea. Information and resources about EPT were created for clinicians at: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/ept>.

For More Information or Free Resources

STD and HIV Section

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(651) 201-5414

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/std>

<http://www.WrapTestTreat.com>

<http://www.NoMasSTDs.com>

<http://www.StopSyphMN.com>

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/sep>

Minnesota Family Planning & STD Hotline

1-800-78-FACTS voice/TTY (statewide)
(651) 645-9360 (metro area)

<http://sexualhealthmn.org>

American Social Health Association

PO Box 13827

Research Triangle Park, NC 27709
(919) 361-8400

<http://www.ashastd.org>

National AIDS and STD Hotlines

1-800-CDC-INFO

1-888-232-6348 TTY

<http://www.cdc.gov>

CDC National Prevention Information Network

PO Box 6003

Rockville, MD 20849-6003

(800) 458-5231

(800) 243-7012 TTY

<http://www.cdcnpin.com/stdawareness/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

National Center for HIV, Viral Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention

Division of STD Prevention

1600 Clifton Road

Atlanta, GA 30333

(800) 232-4636

<http://www.cdc.gov/std>

<http://www.cdc.gov/std/training/clinicalslides/>

<http://www.nnptc.org/>