

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

fact sheet

- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are diseases that are passed from person to person through sexual contact. They include syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, chancroid, herpes simplex, genital warts, trichomoniasis, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis A and hepatitis B. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that 19 million STD infections occur annually, almost half of them among youth ages 15 to 24 (<http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats/trends2004.htm>).
- According to CDC's 2004 STD data, Georgia reported 34,280 cases of chlamydia and had the eighth highest chlamydia rates in the United States during 2004 (<http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats/tables/table2.htm>). There were 15,783 cases of gonorrhea reported for Georgia in 2004, ranking fifth in the nation for the highest gonorrhea cases (<http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats/tables/table12.htm>). Georgia reported a total of 549 cases of primary and secondary syphilis in 2004, ranking third in the nation for rates of primary and secondary syphilis (<http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats/tables/table24.htm>).
- STDs are preventable and several are easily treated and cured. However, most adolescents and young adults are not adequately screened for STDs, especially for chlamydia and gonorrhea. Both are easily treated, but because they are often asymptomatic, especially in females, screening is necessary to detect infection (CDC, *MMWR* 2005; 51(15) - 387).
- Individuals infected with gonorrhea are often co-infected with Chlamydia. This led to the recommendation for persons being treated for gonorrhea to also receive treatment for chlamydia (CDC. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases treatment guidelines 2002*; 51 (No. RR-6).
- Based on the 2005 Chlamydia Awareness Campaign of the Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Public Health, 98 percent of the total positive gonorrhea and chlamydia tests were in those aged 18 to 25 years (*Georgia Division of Public Health/STD Section, 09/05*). Please note that the campaign focused on students at colleges and universities in local areas.
- Syphilis, which is passed from person to person through direct contact with a syphilis sore, presents with symptoms during its first two stages of infection. The first stage of infection, known as primary syphilis, results in a painless sore(s), and the second stage, known as secondary syphilis, is usually noticeable by a rash or multiple lesions that may appear in the genital area, on the hands, feet, face, or generally over the whole body. Syphilis can infect the baby of an infected woman during her pregnancy. If untreated, the child may become developmentally delayed, have seizures, or die (<http://www.cdc.gov/std/syphilis/STDFact-Syphilis.htm>, May 2004).

- STDs affect men and women of diverse backgrounds and economic levels. However, STDs disproportionately affect women, infants, young people, and minorities. The occurrence of STDs is most prevalent among teens and young adults (<http://www.cdcnpin.org/scripts/std/std.asp>).
- Public health departments can test for most STDs, including HIV, for free or at a reduced cost. Most community health centers and clinics offer HIV and STD counseling and testing as well. A personal healthcare provider can also test for most STDs, including HIV, or provide information on a local testing facility (http://www.knowhivaids.org/tested_facts.html).

COSTS

- Based on CDC's 2004 STD data, the direct medical costs associated with STDs in the United States are estimated at \$13 billion annually (<http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats/trends2004.htm>).
- Georgia's approximate federal budget for STD Prevention for FY 2005 is \$3.9 million (*Georgia DHR/Division of Public Health/STD Section, 09/05*).

RESOURCES

Websites:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

www.cdc.gov

Georgia Department of Community Health, Division of Public Health, STD/HIV Section

www.health.state.ga.us/programs/stdhiv/

Hotlines:

CDC National STD and AIDS Hotlines 1-800-227-8922 or 1-800-342-2437

National Herpes Hotline 1-919-361-8488

Call the Georgia AIDS/STD Hotline at 1-800-551-2728 to receive information on where to go for confidential and/or anonymous STD/HIV testing in Georgia.