

TAKE SOME TIME TO UNDERSTAND THE
IMPACT OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES
AND HOW YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY

**APRIL IS NATIONAL
STD AWARENESS
MONTH!**

JUST THE FACTS

STDs are also sometimes called STIs (sexually transmitted infections). They both refer to the same thing.

The two groups most impacted by STDs in Los Angeles County are young men—particularly men who have sex with men (MSM)—and women of color. Young Black gay/bisexual men are also greatly affected by syphilis, which also puts them at greater risk for HIV infection.

Los Angeles County has some of the highest STD rates in California. From 2011 to 2015, reported cases of gonorrhea were up 75%; syphilis jumped by 80%; and chlamydia increased by 14%, according to figures from the California Department of Public Health.

A large majority of gonorrhea cases (75%) in L.A. occur in people between the ages of 15 and 34.

Chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis are all curable with medicines.

Sexually active MSM should be tested for syphilis, chlamydia, gonorrhea, and HIV every 3-6 months. Sexually active HIV-positive individuals should also get screened every 3-6 months. We also recommend that individuals ensure they not only get tested through a blood/urine test but also get throat and rectal/vaginal swabs.

Sexually active MSM should also get vaccinated against meningitis, hepatitis B, and hepatitis A.

For oral sex, the giver (not the receiver) should avoid brushing or flossing his/her teeth directly before or after as it can open small cuts through which infectious bacteria can pass.

Having open and honest communication with your sex partner(s) about STDs, getting screened regularly, using condoms, and being able to identify them are great ways to help prevent the spread of STDs.

**WE CAN
HELP!**

APLA Health offers **FREE STD SCREENING AND TREATMENT**, in addition to medical care, HIV testing, PrEP/PEP services, and free condoms.

STD SCREENING AND TREATMENT IS AVAILABLE AT TWO LOCATIONS:

GLEICHER/CHEN HEALTH CENTER IN BALDWIN HILLS

3743 S. La Brea Ave.

323.329.9900 [for info and appointments]

Open: Mon. - Fri. [hours vary]

LONG BEACH HEALTH CENTER

1043 Elm Ave., Suite 302

on the St. Mary Medical Center campus

562.247.7740 [for info and appointments]

Open: Tue. - Fri. Closed Mon. [hours vary]

CHLAMYDIA

Chlamydia is an STD caused by a bacterial infection.

It is the most common STD. You can get chlamydia by having anal, vaginal, or oral sex with someone who has it.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

MEN

- A discharge from the penis
- A burning sensation when urinating
- Pain and swelling in one or both testicles

WOMEN

- Unusual vaginal bleeding and discharge
- Pain in abdomen
- Painful urination and/or the urge to urinate more frequently

HOW DO I TEST FOR CHLAMYDIA?

These days, testing is completely painless. Most cases can be diagnosed from a urine sample. However, if there is risk of oral, vaginal, or rectal infection a medical provider may also elect to do a swab.

IT'S TOO LATE AND I'M FEELING THE BURN. NOW WHAT?

Chlamydia can be treated with antibiotics. It's as simple as getting one shot, or taking a pill once total or twice daily for seven days, depending on treatment method. These treatments are highly effective, and after 1-2 weeks the infection should be gone.

You should plan to get tested at the same place you were diagnosed about 3 months later to make sure you are cured.

GONORRHEA

Like chlamydia, gonorrhea is an STD caused by a bacterial infection.

Men who have sex with men have it at higher rates. You can get gonorrhea by having anal, vaginal, or oral sex with someone who has it.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Some people may have no symptoms at all, but most will show signs of infection. Some symptoms include:

- A white, yellow, or green discharge from the penis
- A burning sensation when urinating

HOW DO I TEST FOR GONORRHEA?

Most cases can be diagnosed from a urine sample. However, if there is risk of oral, vaginal, or rectal infection a medical provider may also elect to do a swab.

I ALREADY HAVE IT. HOW DO I GET RID OF IT?

Gonorrhea can be treated with antibiotics. It's as simple as getting one shot, or taking a pill once total or twice daily for seven days depending on treatment method. These treatments are highly effective, and after 1-2 weeks the infection should be gone.

You should also plan to get tested at the same place you were diagnosed about 3 months later to make sure you are cured.

SYPHILIS

Syphilis is an STD caused by a bacterial infection.

Men who have sex with men have it at higher rates. If left untreated, syphilis can cause damage to the heart, brain, and eyes, among other parts of the body. In serious cases, it may even lead to death.

HOW IS SYPHILIS SPREAD?

Syphilis can be spread through direct contact with a chancre during anal, vaginal, or oral sex.

These sores can be present on the penis, vagina, anus, in the rectum, inside the mouth, or on the lips.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Many people infected with syphilis do not have any symptoms for years, yet remain at risk if they are not treated. For most people the symptoms develop in four different stages:

- **Primary syphilis** (1 week-3 months after exposure): One or more sores (chancres) will develop on the genitals or in/around the mouth. The sores look like bug bites and are often hard and painless. They last for about 6 weeks and then disappear on their own.
- **Secondary syphilis** (6 weeks-6 months after exposure): Typically, a rash develops on the palms of the hands and feet. Other symptoms include warts in the groin area, white patches inside the mouth and swollen lymph glands. Like primary syphilis, this will also go away without treatment.
- **Latent syphilis** (1 year after exposure): At this stage, symptoms have usually disappeared and the person who is infected can no longer infect sexual partners. The disease, however, remains in the body and can still cause serious damage.
- **Tertiary syphilis** (10-30 years after exposure): If still left untreated, the infection may cause paralysis, blindness, dementia, deafness, impotence, and death.

HOW DO I TEST FOR SYPHILIS?

Testing can be done through a simple blood test or by analyzing fluid from a chancre.

OH NO, I HAVE IT! NOW WHAT?

Syphilis can be treated with antibiotics. It's as simple as getting one shot, or taking a pill once total or twice daily for seven days, depending on treatment method. These treatments are highly effective, and after 1-2 weeks the infection should be gone. It is important to start medication immediately after being diagnosed, as treatment will not repair any damage already done to the body.

You should also plan to get tested at the same place you were diagnosed every 3 months for a year to make sure you are completely cured.