

Georgia Department of Human Resources

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are diseases that are passed from person to person through sexual contact. They include syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, herpes simplex, genital warts, trichomoniasis, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis A and B.
- In 2001, Georgia reported 18,777 gonorrhea cases, the fifth highest rate in the United States. There were 33,587 cases of chlamydia reported for Georgia. According to the CDC, Georgia ranks third in the rate of chlamydia cases reported in the United States. Although reported syphilis cases have been declining in the past few years, Georgia reported 2,011 cases. Georgia ranks fourth in the nation for rates of primary and secondary syphilis. Georgia also has the eighth highest number of AIDS cases reported since 1981.
- Individuals infected with a STD will not always have noticeable symptoms. Seventy-five percent (75%) of women and 70% of all men with chlamydia infection will have no symptoms. Gonorrhea causes no symptoms in up to 80% of women and 10% of men. Special tests must be performed to detect infection. But if STDs are identified and treated early, life-threatening complications and costly medical care can often be prevented.
- However, syphilis, which is acquired through direct contact with a syphilis lesion, presents with symptoms during its first two stages of infection. The first stage of infection, known as primary syphilis, results in a single painless sore, and the second stage, known as secondary syphilis, is usually manifested by a rash or multiple lesions that may appear in the genital area, on the hands, feet or face. Congenital syphilis may occur when a pregnant mother passes the infection on to her newborn.
- Complications from most STDs are more common and more severe in women than in men. If untreated, some STDs in women can cause costly and severe health problems including sterility, cervical cancer, tubal pregnancy, spontaneous abortions, premature births, stillbirths, low birth weight and other infant complications.
- In the 2000 Chlamydia Project, women ages 15-19 years had the highest chlamydia positivity (12.5%), compared to all other age groups.
- The U.S. Preventive Service Task Force and the Georgia Department of Human Resources Division of Public Health recommend routine chlamydia screening for young sexually active women as part of regular comprehensive preventive health services.

- Confidential testing for chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, and HIV is available at all county health departments. Counseling and treatment of people who have tested positive for any of these diseases are also available. County and district public health staff assist infected individuals to notify their sex partners of the need for testing and treatment.

Costs

- The total public and private costs of STDs in the United States have been conservatively estimated as about \$10 billion annually, and \$17 billion when sexually transmitted HIV infections are included.
- The cost of treating an adolescent or adult with syphilis is less than \$20.00. However, an infant born to a mother who has not been adequately treated for syphilis can require therapy at an estimated cost of more than \$12,000 per infant.
- Nationwide, the annual health care costs for the 3 million new cases of chlamydia is estimated at \$2 billion and the 650,000 cases of gonorrhea is estimated at \$1 billion.
- The cost of treating Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), which is an STD-related complication, is estimated at \$4.2 billion. Nationwide, more than 100,000 women became infertile as a result of PID, costing an estimated \$200 million each year for infertility-related health care.
- The state and federal budget combined for combating STDs is \$4,469,985. This figure includes federal supplements that were received during the year 2000.

Resources

Websites:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)-www.cdc.gov

Georgia Division of Public Health /STD/HIV-www.dhr.state.ga.us

Hotlines:

Georgia AIDS/STD Hotline 800-551-2728

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

National Herpes Hotline 1-919-361-8488
