APLA Health STD Fact Sheet

In Los Angeles County the two groups most impacted by STDs are young men 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.

Some other facts:

- Between 2010 and 2014, syphilis cases increased 52% for males and 14% for females and 59% of gay/bisexual men with early syphilis were co-infected with HIV.
- Gonorrhea rates overall increased 51% from 2010-14.
- A majority of gonorrhea cases (75%) in L.A. occur in persons between the ages of 15 and 34. In 2014, the highest rates of gonorrhea were among African American men ages 20-29 and African American women ages 15-29.
- Chlamydia rates increased overall 17% from 2010-2014.

APLA Health has actively been engaged in efforts to address STDs in L.A. County by offering free STD screening and treatment services in addition to medical care, HIV testing, and PrEP services.

Services are available in 2 locations: Baldwin Hills and Long Beach.

At the Gleicher/Chen Health Center in Baldwin Hills, testing is available Monday & Wednesday: 8:15 a.m.-5:45 p.m. and Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 8:15 a.m.-3:45 p.m. Call 323.329.9900 for information.

In Long Beach, services are available Tuesday & Thursday 9 a.m.-12 p.m. and 1-4 p.m. Call 562.432.7300 for information.

Visit www.aplahealth.org for more.


**Chlamydia**

Discharge, Burning, and Pain! Oh my!

*What is Chlamydia?*

Chlamydia is an STD caused by a bacterial infection. It is the most common STD and is especially high among gay/bisexual men and women.

*How is Chlamydia spread?*

You can get Chlamydia by having anal, vaginal or oral sex with someone that has Chlamydia.

*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 you prevent Chlamydia?*

Having open and honest communication with your sex partner(s) about STDs and being able to identify them are great ways to help prevent the spread of Chlamydia. In addition, the use of a condom when engaging in anal or vaginal sex is beneficial in lowering risk of infection. 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. As always, it is important to take whatever precautions you believe will reduce your risk for infection and to get tested every 3-6 months if you are sexually active.

*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 they may also elect to do a swab, but that is pain-free as well.

*It’s too late and I’m feeling the burn—now what?*

Luckily for you, 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 Chlamydia should be eradicated from your system.
You should also plan to get tested at the same place you were diagnosed about 3 months later, just to make sure that you are completely cured.

**Gonorrhea**

Catching the Clap

*What is gonorrhea?*

Like Chlamydia, Gonorrhea (commonly known as “the clap”) is also an STD caused by a bacterial infection and is found at higher rates among gay/bisexual men.

*How is gonorrhea spread?*

You can get gonorrhea by having anal, vaginal or oral sex with someone that has gonorrhea.

*What are the symptoms?*

Some men 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 you prevent gonorrhea?*

Having open and honest communication with your sex partner(s) about STDs and being able to identify them are great ways to help prevent the spread of gonorrhea. In addition, the use of a condom when engaging in anal or vaginal sex is beneficial in lowering risk of infection. 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. As always, it is important to take whatever precautions you believe will reduce your risk for infection and to get tested every 3-6 months if you are sexually active.

*How do I test for gonorrhea?*

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 they may also elect to do a swab, but that is pain-free as well.

*I already have it—how do I get rid of it?*

Fortunately, 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 gonorrhea should be eradicated from your system.
You should also plan to get tested at the same place you were diagnosed about 3 months later, just to make sure that you are completely cured.

**Syphilis**

*From sore, to rash, to...death?!*

**What is syphilis?**

Syphilis is an STD caused by a bacterial infection and found more commonly among gay/bisexual men than other groups. 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 syphilis sore 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 to 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. However, the disease 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 you prevent syphilis?**

Having open and honest communication with your sex partner(s) about STDs and being able to identify them are great ways to help prevent the spread of syphilis. It is also important to avoid contact with chancres (infectious sores), as syphilis can be spread through skin-to-skin contact. In addition, the use of a condom when engaging in anal or vaginal sex is beneficial in lowering risk of infection. 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. As always, it is important to take whatever precautions you believe will reduce your risk for infection and to get tested every 3-6 months if you are sexually active.

**Syphilis (cont’d)**

From sore, to rash, to...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?*

Fortunately, 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 syphilis should be eradicated from your system. However, it is important to start medication immediately after being diagnosed, as treatment will not repair damage already done to the body due to infection.

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