

STD Screening and Testing in Vermont

Annual sexually transmitted disease (STD) testing for sexually active individuals is recommended, especially for people under age 25. Timely diagnosis and treatment can help to minimize the serious long-term health impacts of STDs, specifically infertility caused by untreated gonorrhea or chlamydia.

Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea can live in a variety of host sites including the throat, rectum, urethra and vagina, so proper screening at the site of exposure is critical for diagnosis. If left untreated, gonorrhea can cause pelvic inflammatory disease and infertility. Symptoms of gonorrhea can include burning with urination, discharge, and irregular bleeding for women, although symptoms are not always present.

Gonorrhea Update

- The number of gonorrhea cases reported to the Vermont Department of Health has substantially increased in 2012, with 90 cases reported as compared to 44 at this time last year. Gonorrhea reports to the departments of health in Maine, New York, and Rhode Island are also on the rise in 2012.
- In the past three years, greater than 40% of men diagnosed with gonorrhea have been identified as men who have sex with men.
- From 1998 through 2011, communities of color have represented greater than 15% of the reported cases in Vermont although this population accounts for less than 4% of the state population. This data highlights one of the health disparities in Vermont.
- Current recommended treatment for gonorrhea is a 250 mg IM Ceftriaxone or Rocephin shot, and a one-time oral dose of one gram of Azithromycin.
- Cephalosporins and Fluoroquinolones, such as Ciprofloxacin, are no longer recommended by the CDC for treatment.

Infectious Syphilis -- Primary, Secondary and Early Latent

Like gonorrhea, transmission of the organism that causes syphilis occurs during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Annual reports of infectious syphilis cases have remained steady for the past decade in Vermont. Seven infectious cases have been reported to date in 2012. In 2011, there were 10 infectious cases reported none of which were infected with HIV. However, in both 2007 and 2008 at least 10 infectious cases were reported, primarily among men who have sex with men (MSM) and HIV positive individuals.

Target Groups for Testing

- All patients with symptoms that suggest disease, such as a painless genital ulcer consistent with syphilitic chancre.
- High-risk populations, including MSM, persons with multiple sexual partners, patients presenting to an STD clinic.
- Women attending prenatal or family planning clinics, since pregnant women with the disease can pass it to their fetuses.

Continued on page 2

