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## **STDs increase again in Michigan; regular testing urged to prevent spread of diseases**

LANSING, Mich. – Combined cases of syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia reached an all-time high in the United States in 2018, according to a recently released [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report \(CDC\)](#). The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is urging regular testing among sexually active individuals to help stop the spread of these sexually transmitted diseases.

According to [2018 state-level STD data](#), Michigan is experiencing similar trends as cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis all increased last year.

“Many infected people are unaware of their status which allows them to unknowingly pass it to their partners,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, MDHHS chief medical executive and chief deputy for health. “All sexually active individuals should speak to their health care provider about regular testing so they can get proper treatment and prevent the spread of disease.”

The state has experienced between 45,000 and 51,000 cases of chlamydia annually since 2008, and in 2018 reports increased under 1 percent to just over 51,000. Gonorrhea cases dropped nearly by half from 2008 to 2014 but have climbed 70 percent since then including a 10 percent jump in 2018 to 16,922 cases. Reports of syphilis had dropped following an outbreak in 2013 but jumped 36 percent in 2018 to 654 cases.

Most of these increases are being seen in adolescents, African American men and women and men who have sex with men.

STDs often cause symptoms in men, including burning upon urination, discharge, rashes or sores. In most female cases there are no symptoms. Syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia can be treated with antibiotics. However, if left untreated, the individual can pass on the infection even if there are no symptoms.

Undiagnosed and untreated syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia can lead to severe adverse health effects that include infertility, ectopic pregnancy, stillbirth in infants and increased HIV risk.

Screening and prompt treatment are critical to protect a person’s health and prevent transmission to others. MDHHS works with local health departments, healthcare providers, pharmacists and community-based organizations to test, treat and increase awareness about STDs as well as provide non-traditional opportunities to access service.

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To ensure that STD screening and treatment are accessible to those at highest risk, MDHHS has established STD specialty care centers to increase service options in select areas. Additionally, efforts to build community awareness and provide technical assistance to medical providers have increased. These initiatives focus on priority populations such as women of childbearing age and adolescents, as well as Michigan's most vulnerable residents.

Understanding risk, abstaining from sex, reducing the number of partners and consistently and correctly using condoms are all effective strategies to prevent the spread of STDs, Khaldun said.

For more information, visit [Michigan.gov/hivstd](https://www.michigan.gov/hivstd).

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