



Health Advisory

Please deliver a copy of the accompanying alert to each provider in your organization.

Questions regarding this alert may be directed to the office of:

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Health Officer

Clark County Public Health
(360) 397-8412

Please Distribute

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for specific incident for situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

HEALTH ADVISORY November 30, 2015

TO: Physicians and other Health Care Providers

FROM: Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH, Health Officer

RE: [Increase in incidence of sexually transmitted diseases in Southwest Washington and Portland metro area.](#)

Background

Health officials in Clark County are seeing an increase in incidence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and are reminding providers to be aware of screening and treatment guidelines and reporting requirements. Table 1 illustrates the rising trend for syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia cases over recent years.

Table 1. Number of Reported Cases, Clark County 2010-2015 Q3

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Syphilis	14	12	46	42	53	48
Gonorrhea	172	161	150	147	214	179
Chlamydia	1358	1501	1391	1416	1531	1303

**Syphilis data includes cases of any and all stages.*

Providers should also be aware that an ad campaign in the Portland metro area might increase the number of patients seeking treatment for syphilis. Because of a dramatic increase in Portland metro area syphilis cases, the Oregon Health Authority is sponsoring a “Syph Aware” ad campaign intended to encourage patients in Oregon and Southwest Washington to ask about the need for syphilis screening. Ads will run for at least two months on TriMet buses starting in November. The ads will direct the public to a syphilis awareness website: www.SyphAware.org.

Recommendations

Healthcare providers play a critical role in preventing and treating STDs. When providing care to persons who have, or are at risk for, STDs please refer to the [2015 STD Treatment Guidelines](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

- Consider recommending HIV testing when you test for other STDs and consider PrEP for at-risk populations. For more information on PrEP, visit the Washington State Department of Health [website](#).
- Providers should continue to annually screen sexually active adolescent females, even if symptoms are not present. Screening for infection and treatment of chlamydial disease are critical to control this infection.
- **Dual treatment of gonorrhea infection is necessary** in both the presence and absence of chlamydial infection. CDC treatment guidelines do not recommend single drug treatment of gonorrhea. The recommended treatment is ceftriaxone and azithromycin.

- Heterosexual patients who test positive for chlamydia or gonorrhea should be offered Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) for their sex partner(s). Preliminary research showed decreased rates of reinfection, especially for gonorrhea, for cases whose partners were given EPT compared to referral for testing and treatment. A fax prescription form with a list of participating pharmacies is included in the STD case report form. **Currently EPT is not used for males who have sex with males.**

If you have questions about the best plan of care for an STD case, consult an Infectious Disease Physician or the [STD Clinical Consultation Network](#).

Resources available through Public Health

For patients with confirmed syphilis, providers may request Bicillin, offered at no cost through Clark County Public Health (CCPH). To request Bicillin, please call the STD Program line: (360) 397-8082. The request form is also available on our [website](#).

For sex partners of persons infected with chlamydia or gonorrhea, EPT packets can be accessed free of charge through any participating pharmacy or CCPH. EPT packets are supplied by the WA Department of Health STD Services program. Each packet includes Azithromycin 1 gm (plus Cefixime 400 mg for gonorrhea packets only), allergy warning (English and Spanish), condoms and information on gonorrhea and/or chlamydia.

Reporting STDs

Timely and complete reporting of STDs to CCPH is essential for ensuring further case identification and interrupting the chain of infection through patient level interventions such as partner notification and treatment.

Reporting requirements:

- Health care providers: notifiable to local health jurisdiction within 3 work days.
- Hospitals: notifiable to local health jurisdiction within 3 work days.
- Laboratories: notifiable to local health jurisdiction within 2 work days.
 - ➔ For syphilis: a specimen submission is required to the State Public Health Laboratory.

How to report an STD to CCPH:

Complete and fax the [STD case report form](#) to (360) 397-8080. If you have any questions or need assistance, please call the CCPH STD Program at (360) 397-8082.

Additional resources

National Network of STD Clinical Prevention Training Center:

http://courses.nnptc.org/course_catalog.html

Washington Department of Health PrEP Drug Assistance Program

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/IllnessandDisease/HIVAIDS/HIVCareClientServices/PrEPDAP>

CDC Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis for the Prevention of HIV Infection in the United States – 2014 Clinical Providers Supplement.

<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/PrEPProviderSupplement2014.pdf>

Thank you for your partnership.