

Early syphilis

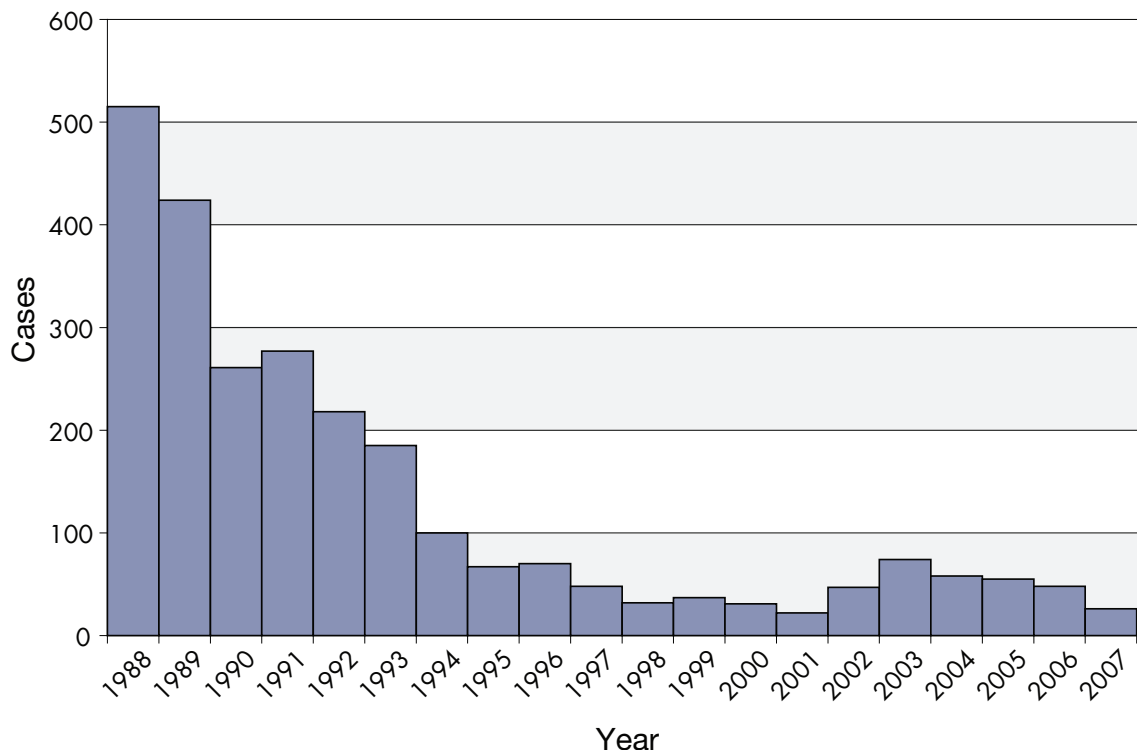
Syphilis is a sexually transmitted disease of protean manifestation caused by the spirochete *Treponema pallidum*. Early syphilis cases represent an aggregate of primary, secondary and early latent cases of less than one year's duration. The 26 early syphilis cases reported in 2007 reflect a 22-case decrease (54%) compared to the 48 cases reported during 2006. Twenty-one percent of the early syphilis cases reported during 2007 were among men who have sex with men. The infection may be transmitted among sex partners during the primary and second stages.

Syphilis is transmitted via vaginal, rectal or oral sexual contact. Syphilis can be prevented by abstaining from sex or only having sex with one uninfected sex partner. Those who are sexually active outside of a mutually monogamous relationship can lower their risks of infection by using a condom when engaging in sexual activity.

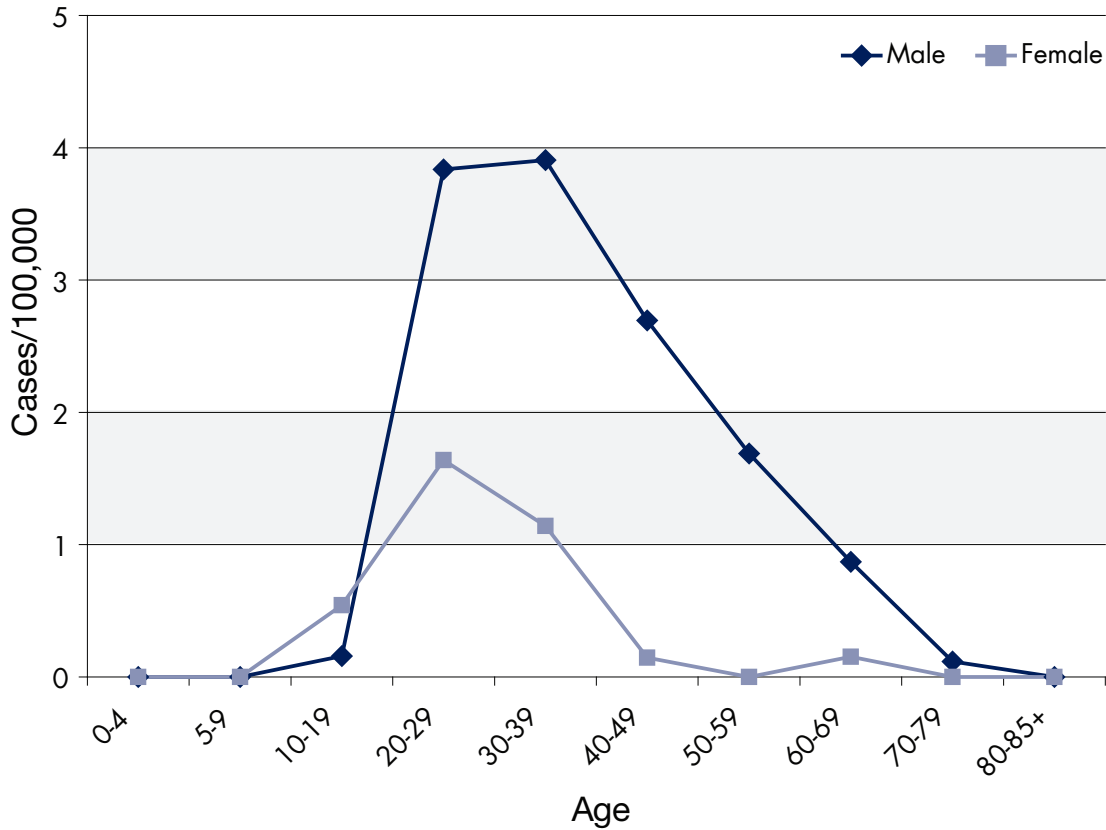
It is important to identify and treat persons with early syphilis to prevent late complications, such as brain and heart damage, and to prevent congenital infections. Moreover, persons with primary or secondary syphilis more easily acquire and transmit HIV. An effective way to limit the spread of syphilis is to evaluate and treat recent sex partners of persons with early syphilis.

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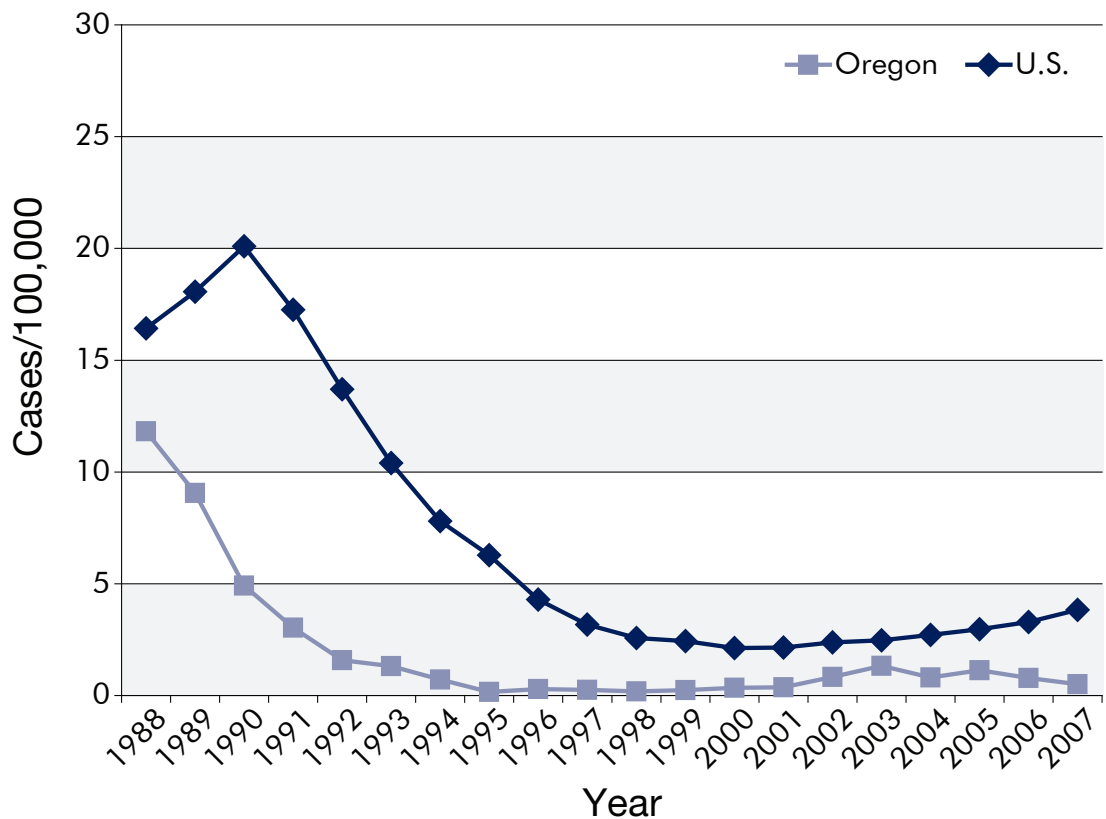
Early syphilis by year: Oregon, 1988–2007



Incidence of early syphilis by age and sex: Oregon, 1998–2007



Incidence of primary and secondary syphilis: Oregon vs. nationwide, 1988–2007*



*For national surveillance, only primary and secondary syphilis cases are tracked and reported

Incidence of early syphilis by county of residence: Oregon, 1998–2007

