



Minding the Gap

Sexually Transmitted Infections

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are common. So are sexual relationships following release from incarceration. By offering STI screening and treatment, correctional facilities can reduce the amount of time someone is infectious and stop the chain of transmission to others in surrounding communities. Chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis have been identified as priorities due to their prevalence and the ability of public health programs to control their spread. These STIs are curable, however many infections remain undiagnosed because they are either asymptomatic or unrecognized. Untreated, these infections can lead to serious health problems (e.g., pregnancy complications, dementia). Chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis can be transmitted through vaginal, anal or oral sex, as well as during pregnancy or childbirth.

STI Screening Recommendations

STI screening is recommended for any person with symptoms. For people who are asymptomatic, STI screening is indicated for patients that report a new sexual partner, having multiple partners, using condoms inconsistently or not at all, or being pregnant. Women meeting any of these criteria should be screened for chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis and HIV. Men who have sex with men meeting any of these criteria should be screened for HIV, gonorrhea and syphilis.

STIs in Oregon

STI	Reported cases, 2013	Most impacted populations	Did you know?
Chlamydia	14,264	People aged 15–24 Women Blacks and African Americans	Chlamydia is the most common reportable illness in Oregon.
Gonorrhea	1,741	People aged 15–24 Blacks and African Americans Men who have sex with men	There is concern that some strains of gonorrhea are becoming resistant to treatment and might not be curable with current medications.
Syphilis	404	Men who have sex with men Men with HIV	Syphilis is on the rise. In 2007, Oregon had only 26 reported cases.

Symptoms of STIs: Chlamydia, Gonorrhea and Syphilis

Many people with STIs are completely asymptomatic. Even when people have no symptoms they can pass STIs on to others. Although many people are asymptomatic, below are symptoms which may occur:

Chlamydia: painful urination, lower abdominal pain, vaginal discharge in women, discharge from the penis in men, pain during sexual intercourse in women, testicular pain in men.

Gonorrhea: thick, cloudy or bloody discharge from the penis or vagina, pain or burning sensation when urinating, abnormal menstrual bleeding, painful and swollen testicles, painful bowel movements, anal itching.

Syphilis: Syphilis develops in 4 different stages with different symptoms. Neurological complications can occur at **any** stage.

Primary:

A sore (chancre) that is usually painless develops at the site where the bacteria entered the body. The chancre commonly occurs within 3 weeks of exposure but can range from 10 to 90 days. A person is highly contagious during the primary stage. In men, a chancre often appears in the genital area. In women, chancres can develop on the outer genitals or on the inner part of the vagina where it may go unnoticed. A chancre may also occur in an area of the body other than the genitals. Swelling of the lymph nodes may occur near the area of the chancre. The chancre usually lasts for 3 to 6 weeks, heals without treatment, and may leave a thin scar.

Secondary:

Secondary syphilis is characterized by a rash that appears 2 to 8 weeks after the chancre develops and sometimes before it heals. The rash often develops over the body and commonly includes the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet. Other symptoms such as fever, sore throat and swelling of lymph nodes may also occur, which means the infection has spread throughout the body. A person is highly contagious during the secondary stage.

Latent:

If untreated, an infected person will progress to the latent stage of syphilis. The latent stage is defined as the year after a person becomes infected. After the secondary-stage rash goes away, the person will not have any symptoms for a time (latent period). The latent period may be as brief as 1 year or range from 5 to 20 years.

Late stage:

This is the most destructive stage. If untreated, the late stage may begin as early as 1 year after infection or any time during a person's lifetime. A person with syphilis may never experience this stage of the illness. During this stage, syphilis may cause serious blood vessel and heart problems, mental disorders, blindness, and even death.

Contact us!

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