

# Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

In Contra Costa County, the rates of chlamydia are highest among young adults between the ages of 20-24 (1,347.1 cases per 100,000) and 15-19 (1,233.2 per 100,000). These rates are considerably lower than the state average (2,376.3 per 100,000) among 15-24 year olds.<sup>1</sup> Although Contra Costa County has a higher rate of chlamydia (256.4 per 100,000) than most other counties within California in 2002-2004, it still fares better than California overall (324.8 per 100,000).<sup>1</sup>

- Young adults have the highest rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea.
- Women have higher rates of chlamydia in every racial group.
- African Americans have the highest rates of both chlamydia and gonorrhea.
- Syphilis rates are highest among males.

Local Findings



## Rates of Chlamydia, Gonorrhea & Syphilis by Age

Table 1. Contra Costa, 2002–2004

	<b>Chlamydia</b>	<b>Gonorrhea</b>	<b>Syphilis</b>
0–9 yrs	3.5	0.5	0
10–14 yrs	57.8	5.2	0
15–19 yrs	*1,233.2	*234.6	0
20–24 yrs	*1,347.1	*300	2.1
25–29 yrs	638.4	185.5	5.2
30–34 yrs	242.9	87.4	2.5
35–44 yrs	89.7	47.0	3.6
45 + yrs	13.3	8.5	0.5
County total <sup>a</sup>	256.4	65.4	1.4

<sup>a</sup> Includes 156 cases of chlamydia and 36 cases of gonorrhea with unspecified ages.

\*Statistically higher rates compared to the county as a whole

Locally, gonorrhea rates are much lower than chlamydia. The rates of gonorrhea are highest among 20-24 year olds (300 per 100,000) and 15-19 year olds (234.6 per 100,000) in the county. These rates are similar to the state overall average among 15-24 year olds (310.1 per 100,000).<sup>1</sup> Similar to chlamydia, Contra Costa County as a whole has a higher rate of gonorrhea (65.4 per 100,000) than most other counties within California, but has rates lower than the state overall (74.9 per 100,000).

Primary and secondary syphilis is most common among older age groups (20-44 years) in Contra Costa, with the lowest rates in this age range among 20-24 year olds (2.1 per 100,000) and the highest among 25-29 year olds (5.2 per 100,000). The rate for Contra Costa county overall (1.4 per 100,000) is much lower than the state average rate (3.5 per 100,000).<sup>1</sup>

Similar to syphilis, the largest number of chlamydia cases occur among people age less than 41 years of age, with the greatest number of cases among 15-24

## Cases of Chlamydia, Gonorrhea & Syphilis by Age

Table 2. Contra Costa County, 2002–2004

	Chlamydia		Gonorrhea		Syphilis	
	Cases	Percent	Cases	Percent	Cases	Percent
0–9 yrs.	14	0.2%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%
10–14 yrs.	133	1.7%	34	1.7%	0	0.0%
15–19 yrs.	2,681	34.8%	510	26.0%	0	0.0%
20–24 yrs.	2,559	33.2%	570	29.0%	4	9.8%
25–29 yrs.	1,108	14.4%	322	16.4%	9	22.0%
30–34 yrs.	481	6.2%	173	8.8%	5	12.2%
35–44 yrs.	426	5.5%	223	11.3%	17	41.5%
45 + yrs.	149	1.9%	95	4.8%	6	14.6%
County total <sup>a</sup>	7,707	100.0%	1,965	100.0%	41	100.0%

<sup>a</sup> Includes 156 cases of chlamydia and 36 cases of gonorrhea with unspecified ages.

year olds followed by 25-29 year olds. Young people also make up most of gonorrhea cases, with 71.4% of all cases occurring among those 15-29 years of age. Although 35-44 year olds did not have the highest rates of early syphilis, this age group accounted for the greatest number of cases during this time period (41.5%).

The highest rates of chlamydia were among African American women (609.1 per 100,000) and African American men (254.5 per 100,000), followed by Latina women

(133.5 per 100,000), Asian women (74.0 per 100,000), and White women (69.7 per 100,000). Women were diagnosed with chlamydia at greater rates (377.5 per 100,000) than males (128.6 per 100,000). It is important to note that women are more likely to be screened for chlamydia as part of their recommended, yearly reproductive health care<sup>2</sup>

## Rates of Chlamydia, Gonorrhea & Syphilis by Race/Gender

Table 3. Contra Costa County, 2002–2004

	Chlamydia		Gonorrhea		Syphilis	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
African American	*609.1	*254.5	*176.6	*165.9	n/a	3.2
Latino	133.5	45.8	12.6	15.3	0	2.3
Asian/PI	74.0	24.9	5.2	11.0	0	0
White	69.7	22.4	12.7	12.8	n/a	2.9
County total <sup>a</sup>	377.5	128.6	71.3	58.8	n/a	2.6

\*statistically higher rates compared to all other race groups and the county as a whole

n/a Numbers are too small to calculate stable rates.

<sup>a</sup>Includes 4994 cases of Chlamydia, 1175 cases of Gonorrhea, and 4 cases of Syphilis of other races

Gonorrhea affects African American women (176.6 per 100,000) and men (165.9 per 100,000) at much greater rates than other racial groups.

Syphilis rates are highest among African American men (3.2 per 100,000), followed by White men (2.9 per 100,000) and Latino men (2.3 per 100,000). Males have a rate of 2.6 per 100,000. (A rate for women could not be calculated due to low numbers.)

African Americans account for the greatest proportion of chlamydia (15.2%) and gonorrhea (23.2%) cases in Contra Costa. Despite higher rates of syphilis among African Americans, White county

residents account for the large majority (67.6%) of cases.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) in this section are reported to the local health department when diagnosed by a medical provider. However, it is important to note that race/ethnicity is often not reported.

Chlamydia is the most reported communicable disease in California and accounted for the majority of reported STD cases in the state during 2002-2004.

STD is the term used to describe more than 25 infections which can pass from one

## Cases of Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, & Syphilis Cases by Race/Gender

Table 4. Contra Costa County, 2002–2004

	Chlamydia		Gonorrhea		Syphilis	
	Cases	Percent	Cases	Percent	Cases	Percent
African American	1,175	15.2%	455	23.2%	5	13.5%
Latino	532	6.9%	84	4.3%	7	18.9%
Asian/PI	184	2.4%	29	1.5%	0	0.0%
White	791	10.3%	216	11.0%	25	67.6%
County total <sup>a</sup>	7,707	100.0%	1,965	100.0%	44	100.0%

<sup>a</sup>Includes 4994 cases of Chlamydia, 1175 cases of Gonorrhea, and 4 cases of Syphilis of other races.

person to another during sexual contact. The United States has the highest STD rate in the industrialized world – roughly half of all Americans become infected with an STD before the age of 35.

Despite the prevalence of STDs, studies show that many people are unaware of their risks for contracting an STD or the serious, and sometimes deadly, health consequences that may result from an untreated infection.

Some STDs, such as gonorrhea or chlamydia, often cause no symptoms. People who do not know they are infected risk infecting their sexual partners. Women who are infected while pregnant

may negatively impact the health of their unborn children.<sup>1</sup> If left untreated, these diseases could cause debilitating pain or may destroy a woman’s ability to have children. Some STDs can be cured with a single dose of antibiotics, but some, such as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) or herpes, are incurable. People with these diseases remain infectious for the rest of their lives.

Having multiple sex partners increases one’s risk of getting an STD. People who have who have unprotected sex (who do not use condoms) are at the greatest risk of contracting STDs.

According to recent state reports, primary and secondary syphilis is on the rise, primarily due to outbreaks among men who have sex with men throughout all regions of California.

#### Data sources: Sexually Transmitted Diseases

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##### Text

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention STD information website: <http://www.cdc.gov>

2. California Department of Health STD Control Branch website: <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/dcdc/std/stdindex.htm>

##### Tables

Population data from:

California Department of Finance (April 2006). *Estimated Race/Ethnic Population with Age and Sex Detail 2000-2004*. Sacramento, CA.

California Department of Finance (May 2006). *E-4 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State 2001-2006*, with DRU Benchmark. Sacramento, CA. Available online at: <http://www.dof.ca.gov/HTML/DEMOGRAP/Druhpar.htm>