



# News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Reported Sexually Transmitted Diseases Reach an All-Time High in California**

SACRAMENTO – Rates of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) continue to increase in California, according to new statistics from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). These diseases are reportable to the state and local health departments. The data are presented in CDPH's 2016 STD Annual Report: a [summary](#) can also be found on CDPH's website.

Over a quarter million cases of STDs were reported in 2016, a 40% increase compared to five years ago including, 198,503 cases of chlamydia, 64,677 of gonorrhea, and 11,222 of early syphilis. Particularly concerning to health officials, 207 cases of congenital syphilis were reported. If not caught early, syphilis during pregnancy can result in congenital syphilis leading to stillbirth or permanent, lifelong disabilities. Syphilis can also cause permanent loss of vision, hearing and other neurologic problems in adults. If left untreated, STDs can increase the risk of HIV infection and lead to lifelong reproductive health problems.

"The number of reported STDs in California is increasing at a concerning rate," said CDPH Director and State Public Health Officer Dr. Karen Smith. "This is the third year in a row that we have seen increases in chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis."

These three diseases can be prevented by consistent use of condoms, and they can be cured with antibiotics, so regular testing and treatment is very important, even for people who have no symptoms.

Chlamydia and gonorrhea rates are highest among people under age 30. Rates of chlamydia are highest among young women, whereas males account for the majority of syphilis and gonorrhea cases.

Regular screening for STDs is recommended for people who are sexually active. STD services also provide opportunities for further prevention of HIV through testing and pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP.

"All Californians need to know how to protect themselves and their partners," said Smith. "Getting tested regularly is one of the most important steps." A directory of where to get tested can be found at this [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention webpage](#).

CDPH is collaborating with the California Department of Education and community groups to implement the newly enacted California Healthy Youth Act, which mandates comprehensive STD/HIV prevention education in schools. For more information, go to the [CDPH Sexually Transmitted Diseases Control Branch website](#).

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