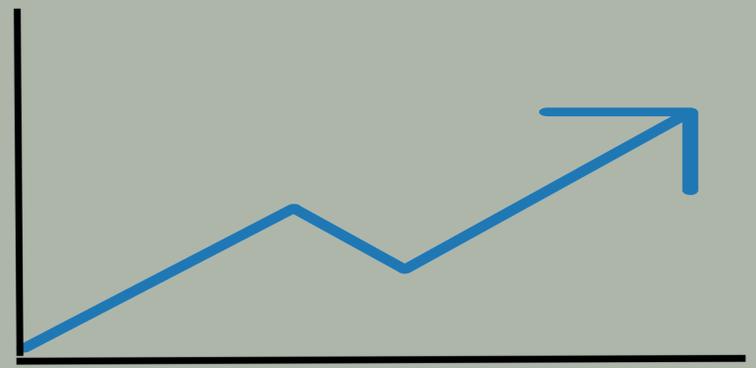


# Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) reach epidemic levels in California.



- In 2018, the number of reported cases was:
  - 25,344 for syphilis (all stages) - 265% more than 10 years ago
  - 79,397 for gonorrhea - 211% more than 10 years ago
  - 232,181 for chlamydia - 56% more than 10 years ago
- STDs are increasing in all regions of the state, among both men and women. Disparities in STD rates persist throughout the state, with the highest among young people (ages 15-24), African-Americans, and gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men. Underlying drivers of the increases of STDs relate to a complex web of social factors. Some people diagnosed with STD have experienced substance use, incarceration, the exchange of sex for money/housing/other resources, poverty, homelessness and disparities in access to care.

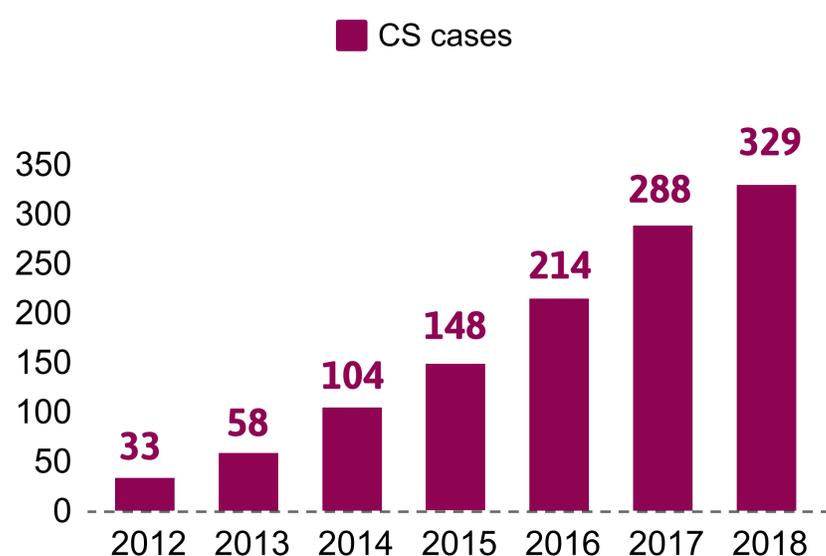
- Syphilis is a major public health problem in California and has increased in all regions of the state, and among both males and females.
- Persons with syphilis might have mild symptoms or no symptoms and be unaware of their infection, so syphilis testing is essential. Left untreated, **syphilis can affect the heart, brain and other organs of the body.**
- Persons with syphilis were predominantly male, with most male cases among men who have sex with men.
- **In recent years, the greatest increases in syphilis were among women.** From 2008-2018, the total number of reported early syphilis cases increased 743% among women compared to 268% among men. Cases of congenital syphilis, which occur when infection is transmitted from mother to child during pregnancy, increased 391% over the same period.
- The number of infants born with congenital syphilis increased for the 6th year in a row.



Nearly **7 out of 10** early syphilis male cases were among men who have sex with men in 2018.



In 2018, **15%** of women of childbearing age diagnosed with syphilis were pregnant.

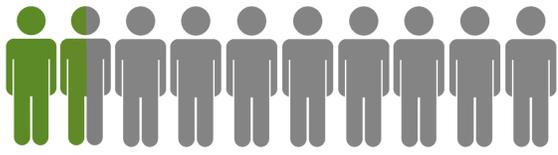


- Congenital syphilis can cause **severe illness in babies including premature birth, low birth weight, birth defects, blindness, and hearing loss.** It can also lead to **stillbirth and infant death.**
- In 2018 alone, there were 19 infant stillbirths, 3 neonatal deaths, and 31 infants born with other symptoms or complications from syphilis.
- Congenital syphilis is preventable with testing and treatment during pregnancy.

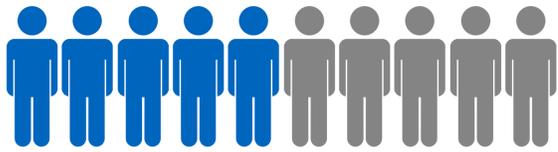


\*Early syphilis includes the primary, secondary, and early non-primary non-secondary stages of the infection.

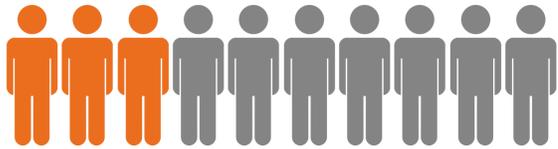
- Chlamydia and gonorrhea are the most commonly reported STDs in California. Although these STDs are curable, they often don't show symptoms and go undetected, which **can lead to serious complications, like infertility.**
- Chlamydia and gonorrhea disproportionately impact people in their teens and twenties:



Less than **2 out of every 10 people** in California is between the ages of 15-24



BUT people ages 15-24 make up more than **5 out of every 10 chlamydia cases** in California



AND they make up more than **3 out of every 10 gonorrhea cases** in California.

- Emerging antibiotic resistance among gonorrhea is a concern. Gonorrhea is among the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's top three urgent threats for developing drug resistance.

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- **Striking disparities exist with STDs in California.**

- African-Americans face a disproportionate burden of STDs compared to other groups, which may reflect unequal access to quality STD care and other intersecting factors.
- Compared to their white counterparts, the rates of reportable STDs among African Americans in California are nearly 5 times higher for chlamydia and gonorrhea AND nearly 3 times higher for early syphilis\*.

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The good news is that most STDs are preventable and curable. Effective STD screening and treatment are available in communities throughout California.

## What can you do prevent STDs?

- ✓ **Become informed!** Knowledge is power. Learn about STDs and how you can reduce your risk.
- ✓ **Talk with your partner!** Discuss STDs and STD testing *before* you have sex.
- ✓ **Protect yourself!** Using condoms and having sex with just one person who is also just having sex with you are ways to protect yourself from STD.
- ✓ **Get tested!** Sexual health is an important part of overall health. The only way to know if you have an STD is to get tested. Talk with your medical provider about your lifestyle and about getting tested for STDs.
- ✓ **Protect your partners!** If you are diagnosed with a STD, talk to your partner about the importance of testing and treatment, and collaborate with your local health department to ensure your partner has an opportunity to protect their health and protect you from reinfection.



\*Early syphilis includes the primary, secondary, and early non-primary non-secondary stages of the infection.