

Epi Update for Friday, April 14, 2023

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Items for this week's Epi Update include

- **CDC releases national STD surveillance data**
- **Spring is here and so are the ticks! Tick removal and testing**
- **Infographic: Get yourself tested**

CDC releases national STD surveillance data

Earlier this week, CDC released their *2021 Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance* report. The data indicate continued increases in chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis across the country. In 2021, there were 1.6 million cases of chlamydia and over 710,000 cases of gonorrhea reported in the U.S., increases of 4.1% and 28% respectively from the preceding year. Syphilis cases continue to surge at alarming rates. There were more than 176,000 cases of syphilis in 2021, an increase of 74% since 2017. There were more than 2,800 cases of congenital syphilis (in which a fetus or neonate is infected from an untreated mother), a surge of 203% in the last five years.

Sexually transmitted infections are a major concern in Iowa, as well. Although 2022 data suggest decreases in chlamydia and gonorrhea, case counts remain high, with more than 14,000 cases of chlamydia and more than 4,200 cases of gonorrhea reported. Syphilis continues to increase in Iowa, with 626 cases of infectious syphilis reported in 2022, an increase of 75% in the last two years. And although the majority of diagnoses are still among men, cases of syphilis among women in Iowa quadrupled from 2019 to 2022. Congenital syphilis remained high in 2022, as well, with eight cases reported (for reference there were eight cases combined in 2015-2020).

More national 2021 STD data can be found at www.cdc.gov/std/statistics/2021/default.htm.

Spring is here and so are the ticks! Tick removal and testing

If you find a tick attached to your skin, remove the tick as soon as possible using the following steps:

- Use clean, fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
- Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth-parts with tweezers. If you cannot remove the mouth easily with tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal.
- After removing the tick, clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.
- Dispose of the tick by flushing it down the toilet. If you would like to bring the tick to your health care provider for identification, put it in rubbing alcohol or place it in a sealed bag/container.

If you develop symptoms such as a rash or fever within several weeks of removing a tick, see your health care provider. You should tell your provider about the recent tick bite, when the bite occurred, and where the tick was most likely acquired.

In general, it is not recommended to test a removed tick for evidence of infection:

- Laboratories that conduct tick testing are not required to have the high standards of quality control used by clinical diagnostic laboratories. Results of tick testing should not be used for treatment decisions.
- Positive results showing that a tick contains a disease-causing organism do not necessarily mean that you have been infected.
- Negative results can lead to false assurance. You may have been unknowingly bitten by a different tick that was infected.
- If you have been infected, you will probably develop symptoms before results of the tick test are available. If you do become ill, you should not wait for tick testing results before beginning appropriate treatment.

For more information from CDC about ticks and health risks to humans, visit www.cdc.gov/ticks/index.html.

Infographic: Get yourself tested



To view in full size, visit

www.cdc.gov/std/saw/gyt/images/GYT_Graphics_STD-Awareness-Week_SM_GYT_IG_2.png.

Have a healthy and happy week!

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