

12. Sexually Transmitted Diseases

What It Is

The incidence rates of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are measured by the number of new cases reported to public health agencies per 1,000 youth ages 15 to 24.

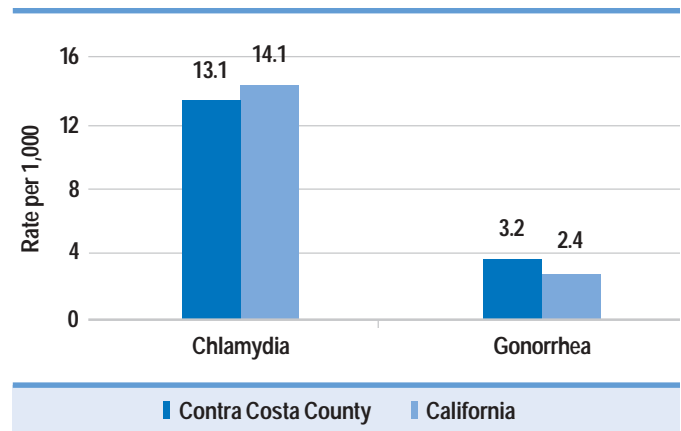
Why It Is Important

Sexually transmitted diseases, including chlamydia, gonorrhea, HIV/AIDS, syphilis, and genital herpes, are preventable, and some are curable. STD's generally reflect adolescent risk-taking behavior, including unprotected sexual activity, which can also lead to other life-altering health outcomes such as teen pregnancy. The incidence of STDs often reflects the level of access to health care, education, and family planning services. It is important for teenagers to be educated about how to protect themselves against STDs, and the importance of diagnosis and treatment.

How We Are Doing

In 2001, data indicates the rate of chlamydia among Contra Costa County youth ages 15 to 24 is slightly lower than the statewide rate, while the rate of gonorrhea is slightly higher. There were nearly ten times as many reported cases of chlamydia as compared to gonorrhea.

Figure 12.1 — Incidence of Chlamydia and Gonorrhea Among Young Adults Ages 15 to 24, 2001



Source: California Department of Health Services, STD Control Branch, 2002. Contra Costa County Department of Health Services, STD program, 2002. State of California, Department of Finance 1970-2040 Population Projections by Age, Sex, and Race/Ethnic Detail, December 1998, 2003.