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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COVID-19 Impacted Trends in STDs
STDs Overall Continue to Rise in DuPage County

DuPage County - Based on [national data](#) from 2020 and 2021, it is clear the COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect trends in diagnosed and reported sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), resulting in likely underreporting of infections and possibly increased STD transmission. The 2020 and 2021 reports reflect the realities of a strained public health infrastructure, but also provide the most current data on reported cases of STDs in the U.S. and locally. Trends presented in 2020 and 2021 STD data should be interpreted cautiously.

Counts of Selected Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Cases Reported among DuPage County Residents, 2017-2021			
Summary: What does this mean?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported chlamydia cases among DuPage County residents decreased by 1% and reported gonorrhea and syphilis* cases increased by 20% from 2017-2021. Note: The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected trends in STDs during 2020 and 2021, resulting in likely underreporting of infections and possibly increased STD transmission. • Two congenital syphilis cases among DuPage County residents were reported in 2021, the first reports received since 2004. 			
	2017	2021	% Change
Chlamydia	2,495	2,469	-1%
Gonorrhea	451	543	+20%
Syphilis*	55	66	+20%
Congenital Syphilis**	0	2	+200%

*Includes syphilis cases staged as primary, secondary, or early non-primary non-secondary.
**Prior to 2021, the last reported congenital syphilis case in DuPage County was from 2004.

April 9-15 is STD Awareness Week, and the DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) is joining the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and partners to help reverse this trend by calling on individuals and healthcare providers to take these three actions to protect themselves, their partners, and their patients from STDs: **Talk, Test, and Treat.**

Untreated STDs Can Have Serious Effects

Chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis are curable with the right medicines, yet most cases go undiagnosed and untreated – which can lead to severe health problems that include infertility (inability to become pregnant), ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy outside the womb), stillbirth in infants, and increased HIV risk.

Anyone who has sex can get an STD, but some groups are more affected than others, including young people aged 15-29, gay and bisexual men, other men who have sex with men, and some racial and ethnic minorities. Prior studies suggest a range of factors may be at play – from socioeconomic challenges, like poverty, to issues of stigma and discrimination. -More-

Established in 1945, DuPage County Health Department promotes physical and emotional health; prevents illness injury and disability; protects health from environmental risk factors, and strives to assure the provision of accessible, quality service.

The good news? **All STDs can be prevented and treated, and most can be cured.** Here's how [individuals](#) and [healthcare providers](#) can add the **Talk. Test. Treat.** strategy into their health routine:

Individuals can

- Talk openly and honestly with partners and healthcare providers about sexual health and STDs.
- Get tested. Many STDs have no symptoms, so getting tested is the only way to know for sure if you have an infection.
- If either you or your partner test positive for an STD, work with your healthcare provider to get the correct treatment. All STDs are treatable with medicine, and some STDs are curable entirely. Make sure your treatment works by 1) taking all of the medication your healthcare provider prescribes (even if you start feeling better or your symptoms go away), 2) not sharing your medicine with anyone, and 3) avoiding having sex again until you and your sex partner(s) have all completed treatment.

Healthcare providers can

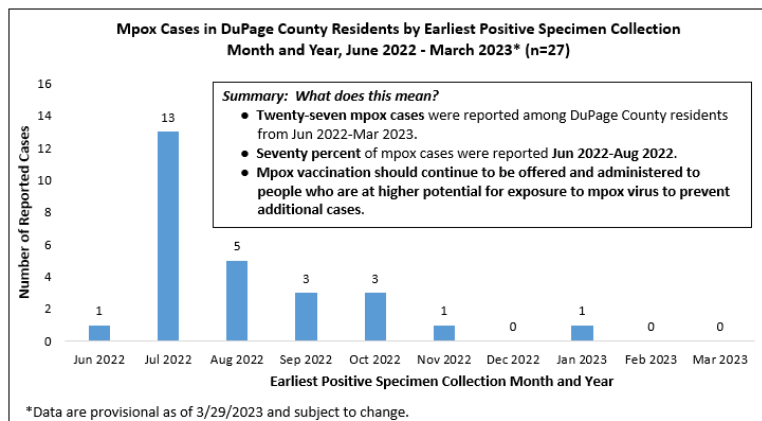
- Provide the best care possible by [talking](#) with patients about sexual health and safe sex practices.
- [Test and screen](#) patients as recommended by CDC.
- Follow [CDC's STD Treatment Guidelines](#) to make sure patients get successful treatment and care.

How to Prevent STDs

- Practice abstinence: The surest way to avoid STDs is to not have sex. This means not having vaginal, oral, or anal sex.
- Use Condoms: Using condoms and dental dams correctly every time you have sex can help you avoid STDs.
- Reduce Number of Sex Partners: Reducing your number of sex partners can decrease your risk for STDs.
- Mutual Monogamy: Agree to only have sex with one person who agrees to only have sex with you.
- Vaccination: Help prevent human papillomavirus (HPV), hepatitis B, and mpox through vaccination of persons who are eligible and at risk for exposure.

The Health Department's STD Clinic located at the Wheaton Office offers:

- Confidential testing, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention counseling for STDs
- Testing and treatment referrals for HIV and hepatitis C
- Evaluation and treatment for human papillomavirus (HPV)-related conditions
- Administration of the JYNNEOS [mpox vaccine](#) to eligible individuals



STD services are available to any person 12 years of age and older, regardless of county of residence. Clients under 18 are eligible to receive free services. To schedule an appointment for STD testing, call DCHD at (630) 682-7400.