



Public Health
Division

County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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HEALTH ADVISORY

To: Medical Providers	Date: March 23, 2017
From: Dr. Arnold Leff, County Public Health Officer	Subject: STD rates on the rise in Santa Cruz County

Key Messages

- Rates of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are dramatically rising in Santa Cruz County, in California, and across the United States. In Santa Cruz County, syphilis rates have increased 308% while gonorrhea rates have increased 448% since 2010.
- April is STD Awareness Month and the Health Services Agency will be doing community messaging on STDs which may result in more questions from your patients and more requests for testing. Visit www.santacruzhealth.org/SEX to learn more.
- Medical providers are critical in helping control the spread of infection by appropriately screening and testing patients, providing timely treatment for patients and their partners, and reporting cases to the Communicable Disease Unit via STD Confidential Morbidity Reports.

Recommendations

- Take a sexual history on all patients to ascertain risk. <https://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/sexualhistory.pdf>
- Screen and treat all patients according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the California Department of Public Health Screening and Treatment Guidelines, and screen men who have sex with men (MSM) for STDs every 3-6 months. <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/std/Documents/STD-Screening-Recs.pdf>
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/std/Documents/STD-Treatment-Guidelines-Color.pdf>
- Treat ill uncomplicated gonorrhea cases with dual therapy (Ceftriaxone 250 mg IM in a single dose *PLUS* Azithromycin 1g orally in a single dose) due to the growing antibiotic resistance of *Neisseria gonorrhoea*.
- Strongly consider syphilis as a differential diagnosis for sexually active patients who present with a wide range of symptoms, especially in MSM. While common symptoms include rash, ulcerative lesions, warty patches (condylomata lata), and alopecia, you should maintain a high level of suspicion for other presentations. Most patients with syphilis will *not* present with symptoms, but require a screening test to detect its presence. Always order a reflex confirmatory (treponemal-specific, e.g., TPPA or FTA-Abs) test when ordering RPR serology for syphilis screening. <http://www.cdc.gov/std/syphilis/default.htm>
- Ensure your patient's partner(s) is/are also treated for any diagnosed infection, to avoid re-infection of your patient and prevent further spread of disease. Re-test all patients diagnosed with chlamydia and gonorrhea 3 months after treatment. <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/std/Documents/Best-Practices-for-Prevention-and-Early-Detection-of-Repeat-CT-and-GC.pdf>
- Please report all STD cases to the Communicable Disease Unit by submitting STD Confidential Morbidity Reports via FAX to (831) 454-5049 or via CalREDIE.
- Questions regarding STDs? Contact our STD Controller - Paula Haller, RN, PHN at (831) 454-4114
The successful detection and control of STDs in Santa Cruz County relies on a strong partnership between medical providers and the Public Health Division. Thank you for continuing efforts!

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

