Teen Sexual Health in California

Chlamydia Infections per 100,000 Youth Ages 15-19

What It Is
On kidsdata.org, indicators of teen sexual health include the number and rate of reported cases of chlamydia and gonorrhea among young people ages 10-19, at the county level overall, by age group, and by gender. Also available are state-level estimates of the percentage of teens ages 14-17 who have not had sex.

Why This Topic Is Important
Sexual health is a critical component of overall teen health and is influenced by complex factors including biology, socioeconomics, community environments, relationships with family and peers, and access to health care and education. While sexuality is a normal part of adolescent development, sexual activity can have serious consequences, including sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancy. It is estimated that although young people ages 15-24 make up 13% of the U.S. population, they represent around 25% of the sexually active population and account for almost 50% of all new STI cases each year.

Among infectious diseases that must be reported to the U.S. government, chlamydia and gonorrhea are the most common, with young people (ages 15-24) having the highest rates of infection when compared with other age groups. Nationwide, African American/black youth experience especially high rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea; in 2019, black youth ages 15-19 were diagnosed with chlamydia at more than five times the rate for white youth of the same age, and with gonorrhea at more than 11 times the rate of their white peers.

Chlamydia and gonorrhea infections are often asymptomatic, particularly in women, so regular screenings are critical in order to provide timely treatment and to reduce disease transmission. If untreated, chlamydia and gonorrhea can lead to chronic pain, pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, and adverse reproductive outcomes.

STIs also have serious economic consequences. In terms of lifetime direct medical costs, new STI cases in 2018 among young people ages 15-24 are estimated to be a $4.2 billion burden on the U.S. health care system.

How Children Are Faring
According to 2017-2018 estimates, 87% of California teens ages 14-17 had never had sex. Young people who engage in sexual activity may be at risk for sexually transmitted infections such as chlamydia and gonorrhea; in


Gonorrhea Infections per 100,000 Youth Ages 15-19: 2018; Showing Counties

Definition: Number of reported cases of chlamydia and gonorrhea per 100,000 youth ages 10-19. By age group (e.g., in 2018, there were 1,504.6 chlamydia infections per 100,000 California youth ages 15-19).

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Chlamydia and Gonorrhea Infections per 100,000 Youth Ages 10-19, by Gender: 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Chlamydia</th>
<th>Gonorrhea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1,260.9</td>
<td>163.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>334.7</td>
<td>103.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Definition: Number of reported cases of chlamydia and gonorrhea per 100,000 youth ages 10-19, by gender (e.g., in 2018, there were 1,260.9 chlamydia infections per 100,000 female youth in California).


2018, 49,672 cases of chlamydia and gonorrhea were reported among youth ages 10-19 statewide. Youth chlamydia and gonorrhea rates in California have fluctuated since 2000 but have increased overall, from 635 cases of chlamydia per 100,000 youth ages 10-19 in 2000 to 789 per 100,000 youth in 2018, and from 98 cases of gonorrhea per 100,000 youth in 2000 to 133 per 100,000 in 2018. Over the same period, statewide and across most counties with data, female youth were diagnosed with chlamydia and gonorrhea at higher rates than their male counterparts.

Although teens ages 15-19 account for the vast majority of chlamydia and gonorrhea cases among youth in California, there also were 914 cases involving children ages 10-14 in 2018.

View references for this text and additional research on this topic:

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