

# Know Your Viruses

Maddie Suhrheinrich  
Staff Reporter

## Chlamydia



A bacteria infection of genital tract. Infected people may show minor symptoms within the first weeks, however some may not display any at all.

### Symptoms:

- Lower abdominal pain
- Painful urination
- Bleeding between periods in women
- Discharge in both men and women

### Treatment:

Antibiotics

## Genital Herpes



Highly contagious and caused by the herpes simplex virus entering through breaks in skin.

### Symptoms:

- Most will not know they have it but if they have symptoms,
- Small, red, blisters or open sores in genital area, as well as pain and itching
- Eventually the sores can bleed

### Treatment:

Medicines given by doctors

## Hepatitis



A contagious viral infection that affects the liver. Symptoms (if occurring) occur within a couple weeks of exposure.

### Symptoms:

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Abdominal pain
- Nausea and vomiting
- Muscle and joint pain
- Dark urine
- Yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes

### Treatment:

Hepatitis B: will go away with time  
Hepatitis C: antiviral medicines

## Gonorrhea



A bacteria infection of genital tract. Symptoms that occur usually do within first 10 days of exposure.

### Symptoms:

- Pain or burning sensation during urination
- Painful bowel movements
- Anal Itching
- Heavy menstrual bleeding, bleeding in between periods
- Thick, Cloudy, or bloody discharge

### Treatment:

Antibiotics

## Human Papilloma-virus



One of the most common STIs. It can put women at risk for cervical cancer, and show symptoms in both men and women.

### Symptoms:

Most do not show symptoms, a few develop genital warts that may bleed

### Treatment:

None

## HIV



An infection with the human immunodeficiency virus. Those showing symptoms generally develop fever like symptoms within 2-6 weeks.

### Symptoms:

- Fever
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Rash
- Fatigue

### Treatment:

No cure

# Syphilis rates climb

Adanya Gilmore  
Photo Editor

Syphilis rates are rising rapidly in states all over the country.

According to *The Atlantic*, since 2014, 20,000 reported cases of syphilis have been reported, and the numbers are going up.

In Indiana, there has been a 70 percent increase in syphilis cases in 2016, according to *The Chicago Tribune*. Similar severe cases have been evident in all states and especially Nevada with 13 cases per 100,000, Texas ranked as number 13 in primary and secondary syphilis rates among the 50 states.

Michigan ranks 16th in a case study conducted in 2013 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Around 90 percent of these cases

have been among men, especially gay and bisexual men according to a report from the CDC.

Syphilis is an old disease, tracing back to before the 14th century. Many historical figures have lived through and died from syphilis, such as Al Capone, Adolf Hitler, John F. Kennedy and Abraham Lincoln.

"The scary part with syphilis is it has three different stages, starting with what's called a shanker," Debbie Mitchell (Health) said. "If people don't get it treated, by the third stage, they can actually die from it."

A shanker is a genital wart that is the first sign of syphilis. According to Mitchell, failure to seek medical attention for these signs may result in the primary stage of syphilis to progress into the tertiary stage, which can lead to nerve damage, dementia, or even death.

Ayla Tulette (11) agreed with the notification classes are inclusive to identify as a part of community.

"No one really teaches the LGBTQ community anything about it, that's wrong," Tulette said. "I never actually learned about STD's."

There has also been concern that there are a lack of classes for diseases such as AIDS/STD. A study done at the University of Michigan for AIDS/STD Prevention found that a lack of routine testing for chlamydia, syphilis, and gonorrhea.

According to the CDC, 10 percent of reported primary and secondary syphilis cases

# Specialists say STD and STI awareness

Luis Borrero  
Staff Reporter

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), sexually transmitted infections, STIs, are at all-time national record highs as of 2015.

In the annual report, the CDC concluded there were more than 1.5 million reported cases of chlamydia, nearly 400,000 cases of gonorrhea and 24,000 cases of syphilis in the U.S.

Compared to the 2014-2015 report, there was a 19 percent increase in reported syphilis cases, almost 13 percent increase in reported gonorrhea cases and nearly a 6 percent increase in reported chlamydia cases.

STIs are at extreme highs in the more populated areas of the U.S., specifically California and New York, with California holding more reported cases per 100,000 adults than the whole U.S. combined.

Lynette Stinson, local epidemiologist for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, pointed to "condom fatigue" in many different groups of people as a cause for these rises.

"Young people, [ages] 16-24, represent a quarter roughly of people who are sexually active, yet they get over

half of the sexually transmitted infections," Stinson said. "Some of it is that those young people are less proactive, they use condoms less, or maybe they're less comfortable asking their partner to use a condom."

Stinson also points to evidence that homosexual and bisexual men are at more risk of contracting STIs due to lack of condom use.

"There's a lot of talk that condom use has dramatically dropped off among men who have sex with other men. People are tired of being hammered over [condom use], and certainly some of that is younger men are simply living in a very different era of HIV, where twenty to thirty years ago HIV was pretty much a death sentence and now we consider it a chronic disease," Stinson said.

State budget cuts, combined with the closings of many STI care clinics, could also be a reason for the increase of sexually transmitted infection diagnoses.

"There's been a big decline in public health funding for the prevention of sexually transmitted infections, and you get what you pay for," Stinson said.

Recently the Obama administration proposed a rule to protect funding for Planned Parenthood clinics, medical centers that are partly dedicated to diagnosing and treating STIs.

"You've got to be tested and then get treated," Stinson said.

This surge in STIs has led to more precautions and awareness as well as the spread throughout the U.S.

Debbie Mitchell warns that condoms are not the ideal protection, some imperfections exist.

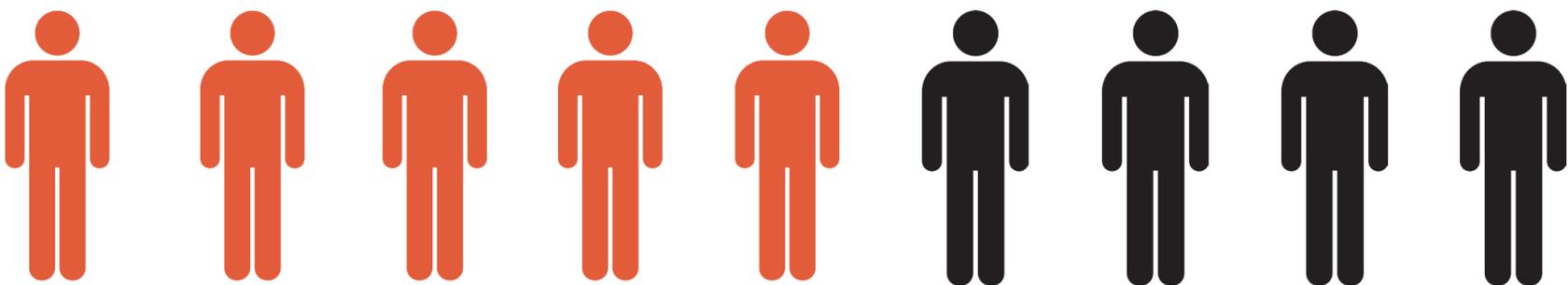
"Condoms don't protect from every STI, some are just skin to skin contact, another probable is people don't realize they can get STIs from having sex with a partner," Mitchell said.

Sexual education is the most important of teaching students about safer sex and spread of STIs.

"We have to continue to educate, particularly young people, they're the ones who get these infections. We need to talk about the risks, how to protect themselves and prevent these infections. Things like HPV, we need to get every kid tested," Stinson said.

Mitchell explained that students were capable

# According to the American Sexual Health Association

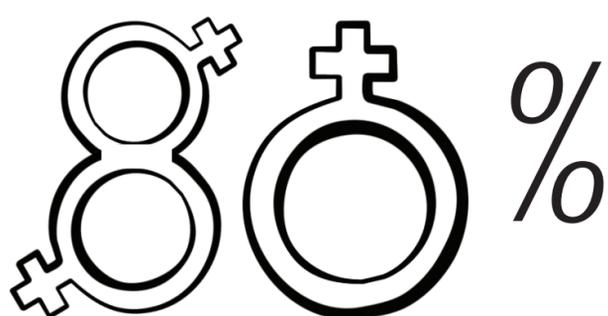


More than 50% of people will have an STD/STI sometime in their lifetime.

The total estimated direct cost of STIs annually in the U.S. is \$15.6 billion (2010 US dollars).



By age 50, at least 10% of people will acquire a genital infection.



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es are known

to be among men having sex with  
men. Between 2014 and 2015, the  
number had increased by 19 per-  
cent and now, syphilis cases are at  
a new high.

Erica Hall (12), a member of  
PRISM at OHS said that it is rele-  
vant that LGBTQ kids are not given  
targeted and well-rounded sex ed.

"It's not a bad thing to educate  
the entire school instead of just  
some people," Hall said. "There's a  
misconception that it's only spread  
through gay people. I think that  
maybe people assume that about  
syphilis and STI's in general."

When asked about the connec-  
tion between LGBTQ students and  
STI's, Mitchell said practicing safe  
sex in general is best.

"If we're all in relationships,  
does it really matter who we're in  
a relationship with?" Mitchell said.

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the health program, until this year.

"Until last year, you could get a  
personal curriculum out of health,  
so we were only getting 50 percent  
of our students taking health class,  
but now as of last year's freshman  
class, everyone has to have health  
again," Mitchell said.

So now that the health program  
is mandatory, Mitchell believes it  
does a good job with teaching all  
students the skills necessary in hav-  
ing safer sex.

"To some freshmen, having any  
kind of sex is so far off, where oth-  
ers are already involved in doing it,  
even though it's illegal at that age,  
[and] there's always the thought  
'it won't happen to me' [or] 'they  
don't look like they have an STI'.  
You can't tell by looking unless you  
look at their genitals, and there's so  
many of them [with] no signs or  
symptoms," Mitchell said.

According to Stinson, not a whole  
lot can be done to halt the rise of  
STIs. However, keeping the clinic-  
ics funded and open and staying  
ultimately safer in terms of sex are  
a couple things that can help. Aware-  
ness is half the battle.

"It is a public health issue, and  
anything that is a public health is-  
sue ends up having repercussions in  
other areas of the public's health that  
you don't even always see initially,"  
Stinson said.

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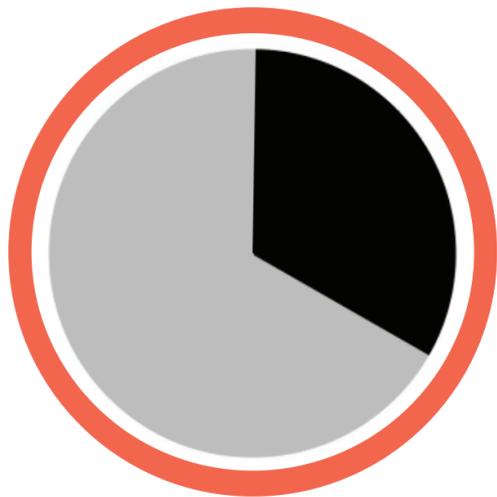
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In a national sur-  
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