

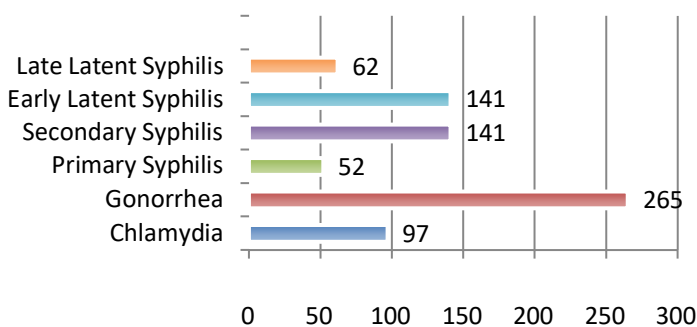


Why focus on men who have sex with men (MSM)?

MSM have disproportionately higher rates of sexually transmitted disease than the general population: ¹

- In 2015 MSM accounted for 81% of all syphilis cases.²
- MSM with gonorrhea represent a growing population treated in STD clinics across the country.³

Figure 1: Disease Burden Among MSM in Indiana, 2015 (n=759)



About MSM in Indiana (2015)

- Total of 947 infections among 759 people were reported.
- 154 people had more than one infection in one year
 - Many individuals became re-infected with another STD within the same year.
- Most infections were located in the Indianapolis metropolitan area (439, or 57.8% of reported infections).
- Nearly 50% of persons were living with HIV.
 - 97 (12.8%) were newly diagnosed
- 47.3% use online apps to find a partner.
- 36.5% report drug and/or alcohol use.
- Approximately 5 sexual partners were reported on average.
- Gonorrhea was the most reported disease (35.0% of infections) followed by Secondary and Early Latent Syphilis (18.6% of infections each).
- Number of sex partners, drug use and sexual position are risks associated with STD contraction.

Commonly reported sexually transmitted diseases

Chlamydia

Second most commonly reported sexually transmitted disease in Indiana among MSM.⁴

Caused by a bacteria when exposure is made through unprotected sexual contact (ejaculation does not have to occur).

Infection occurs in the penis, anus and throat.⁴

Signs and symptoms

Most people do not have symptoms, but those who do will experience:

- Rectal pain, discharge or bleeding
- Burning with urination
- Watery discharge from the penis
- Pain in one of the testicles

Treatment

Single dose of Azithromycin or Doxycycline twice a day for 7 days

Gonorrhea

Most commonly reported sexually transmitted disease in Indiana among MSM.

Transmitted through unprotected oral and anal sex.⁵

Signs and symptoms

Some people will not have symptoms.

Those who do will experience:

- Penile or rectal drainage
- Difficulty or pain urinating

Untreated infections can cause infertility and may spread to the bloodstream resulting in a life-threatening condition that causes arthritis, dermatitis and inflammation of the sheath around the tendons.⁵

Treatment

For persons weighing 300 lbs or less: Ceftriaxone 500mg, IM

For persons weighing more than 300 lbs: Ceftriaxone 1g, IM

Syphilis

Transmitted when direct contact is made with a syphilis sore.⁶

Infection occurs in stages and can last decades depending on the stage.⁶

Signs and symptoms

Primary

- Chancre (round painless sore), often found on the penis or anus, in the rectum, on the lips or in the mouth

Secondary

- Skin rash on hands or feet
- Sores in mouth or anus
- Fever, sore throat, fatigue, headache or hair loss

Early latent

- No symptoms

Late latent

- Damage to bones; joints; blood vessels; and organs including brain, heart and eyes.⁶

Treatment

Benzathine penicillin, dose dependent on stage



Recommended testing

- Annually for ALL MSM, regardless of condom use⁷
- Every 3 – 6 months for those at increased risk, including persons who:⁷
 - Are living with HIV
 - Have multiple sex partners
 - Live in a high prevalence setting, such as a correctional facility
 - Have a partner who tested positive for an STD

Why are MSM at higher risk?

- **Anal sex.** Rectal mucosa is highly susceptible to certain pathogens.⁸
- **Socioeconomic factors** such as substance abuse, dynamics of sexual networks, and multiple partners increase risk of infection and transmission⁸
- **Stigma and discrimination surrounding the MSM lifestyle** negatively affects the health of MSM who may not seek testing or treatment⁹

Expedited partner therapy

Practitioners in Indiana can prescribe antibiotics to exposed sex partners who cannot seek treatment. Prescriptions are given to the infected person to pass onto the partner. For more information, visit the Indiana Department of Health website: <http://www.in.gov/isdh/17440.htm>

HIV and STDs: When a break in the skin is present, such as a chancre caused by syphilis, the risk of HIV transmission is three to five times more likely. Gonorrhea can act as a carrier for HIV, increasing the risk of transmission.³ Nationally, in 2015 nearly half of MSM with primary or secondary syphilis were co-infected with HIV.⁶

Fast facts

- MSM are at higher risk for STDs and are less likely to seek testing and treatment due to stigma.
- Damage to the body from untreated gonorrhea, chlamydia, and syphilis is irreversible.
- Patients should take ALL their antibiotics for the entire duration to fully treat the infection.

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/std/life-stages-populations/stdfact-msm.htm>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/std/syphilis/stdfact-syphilis-detailed.htm>
3. Fox, et. Al <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1446475/pdf/11392941.pdf>
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/std/chlamydia/stdfact-chlamydia-detailed.htm>
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/std/gonorrhea/stdfact-gonorrhea-detailed.htm>

Concerns and complications

Gonorrhea

New, but rare, strains of gonorrhea are resistant to all types of antibiotics. If totally resistant strains reach the epidemic level, there will be no way to cure the disease.

Neurosyphilis

Can happen at any stage of the infection. It is characterized when the infection moves to the brain and spinal cord and can cause a variety of symptoms from blindness and seizures to stroke or death. The neurological impairment is irreversible.⁶

Ocular Syphilis

Can occur at any point in a syphilis infection and can affect any part of the eye. Symptoms involve changes in vision and clarity of vision, and blindness. Some blindness is irreversible.⁶

Figure 2. Reported cases of sexually transmitted diseases among MSM by Age Group, Indiana, 2015 (n= 759)

