

# COWLITZ COUNTY Sexually Transmitted Infections

2010-2019 Data



## BACKGROUND

Aside from COVID-19, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are the most commonly reported communicable disease in Cowlitz County.

Health care providers and labs report most STI cases — including chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis

and herpes — to local public health.

Cowlitz County Health & Human Services oversees contact tracing and case investigation to reduce the spread of STIs locally.

Most STIs can be treated with medication and cured.

If STIs are left untreated, people are at risk for severe, life-long

health outcomes, including infertility, pregnancy complications and damage to the brain, nervous system, eyes and ears.

People who do not access STI care remain vulnerable and are more likely to transmit infections to others.

**LEARN MORE ABOUT STIs:** [www.cdc.gov/std](http://www.cdc.gov/std)

## DATA SUMMARY

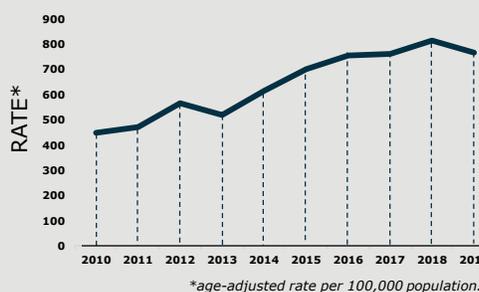
# 667

**total STI cases** were reported among Cowlitz County residents in 2019 . . . that is **1 STI** for every **160 residents**

Cowlitz County's per capita STI case rate was about

**10-15% HIGHER** than the state-wide average

### PER CAPITA STIs



**OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS**, Cowlitz County's per capita STI case rate **WENT UP BY MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS**

### TRENDS OVER TIME: 2010-2019



**CHLAMYDIA CASES:**  
• Per capita chlamydia cases steadily increased and were about **1.5X HIGHER** in 2019 than in 2010

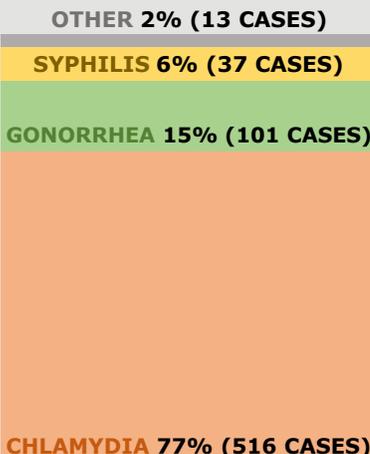


**GONORRHEA CASES:**  
• Per capita gonorrhea case spiked dramatically in 2015 and were about **10X HIGHER** in 2019 than in 2010



**SYPHILIS CASES:**  
• Per capita syphilis cases spiked dramatically in 2017 and were about **20X HIGHER** in 2019 than in 2010

### ANNUAL COUNTS: 2019



### CASES BY AGE: 2019



**CHLAMYDIA CASES:**  
• Per capita chlamydia cases were highest among **18-24-YEAR-OLDS**



**GONORRHEA CASES:**  
• Per capita gonorrhea cases were highest among **18-34-YEAR-OLDS**



**SYPHILIS CASES:**  
• Per capita syphilis cases were highest among **25-34-YEAR-OLDS**

### CASES BY GENDER: 2019



**CHLAMYDIA CASES:**  
• Per capita chlamydia cases were **300% HIGHER among FEMALES**



**GONORRHEA CASES:**  
• Per capita gonorrhea cases were **14% HIGHER among MALES**



**SYPHILIS CASES:**  
• Per capita syphilis cases were **34% HIGHER among MALES**



## For The Community: Prevention & Treatment

Q: How can I avoid getting an STI?

A: There are [several steps](#) you can take to keep yourself and your partner(s) healthy, including:

- Using a condom correctly every time you have sex.
- Having sex with one person who agrees to only have sex with you.
- Getting vaccinated, including the HPV vaccine.

### Did you know?

Free condoms are available at Cowlitz County Health & Human Services' 9th Avenue location in the lobby!

Q: What should I do if I think I have an STI?

A: STIs can spread through contact with skin, genitals, mouth, rectum or bodily fluids. If you were exposed to someone with an STI, or if you have symptoms, it's important to get tested. To find a testing location near you, visit: <https://gettested.cdc.gov/>.

Q: Can STIs be treated?

A: Many STIs are curable and all are treatable. If you test positive for an STI, it's important both you and your partner(s) seek treatment from your doctor right away. Some clinics offer free or low-cost treatment to people who are uninsured: <https://gettested.cdc.gov/>.

## For Providers: Evidence-Based Interventions

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) provides recommendations for evidence-based interventions to address public health issues. Below are USPSTF's recommendations for reducing the spread of chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis:

- Chlamydia and gonorrhea testing for all sexually active women age 25 or younger and

among high-risk women age 25 or older. Find more [here](#).

- Behavioral counseling for all sexually active adolescents and high-risk adults. Find more [here](#).

- Antibiotic ointment in newborn babies' eyes to prevent gonorrhea. Find more [here](#).

- Syphilis testing in pregnant

women. Find more [here](#).

- Testing high-risk teens and adults for syphilis infection. Find more [here](#).

It's important to actively listen to your patients and allow them to ask questions.

*Recommendations made by the USPSTF are independent of the U.S. government.*

## DATA

STI data for Cowlitz County were accessed in May 2022 from Washington State's Public Health Issue Management System (PHIMS) Sexually Transmitted Disease module. Health care providers and labs use PHIMS to report STI results to the Washington State Department of Health.

Time trends and differences between groups were identified using age-adjusted rates. Age-adjusted rates help identify trends and differences that aren't due to the county's growing, and increasingly older, population.

Have questions? Email: [AskCowlitzHealth@co.cowlitz.wa.us](mailto:AskCowlitzHealth@co.cowlitz.wa.us)