

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE QUARTERLY UPDATE

Q3
2019

For the Coos, Curry, and Douglas County Region

THE RESURGENCE OF SYPHILIS

There has been a dramatic uptick in sexually transmitted infections (STIs) across Oregon over the last decade. The Southern Coastal region is no exception. One significant concern is syphilis. Like many STIs, a syphilis infection may not always present clear symptoms. Help us control the spread.

 **600%**

The rate of syphilis cases in the region has increased sharply since 2008 - from about 2 to 12 cases per 100,000 persons.



In 2018, there were more than double the number of cases in males than females. See the section below regarding high-risk groups.

WHAT CAN I DO?



Providers can screen **high risk patients**. High risk groups include men who have sex with men, injection drug users, and those living with HIV.

Syphilis is relatively easy to detect and treat. However, it can lead to **serious complications when left untreated**. This is particularly true for pregnancies. Without appropriate intervention, syphilis results in up to 40% infant mortality. Premature delivery, low birth-weight, and damage to various organs are common outcomes in babies that survive.

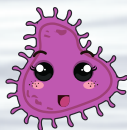
PERINATAL PROTOCOL



Individuals who are **pregnant** should be tested during the first prenatal visit, the beginning of the third trimester and at delivery.

Syphilis is unique among STIs in that there are several distinct stages of progression. **Identifying the appropriate stage is critical** in selecting the right treatment. Communicable disease staff at the local public health department can help in this regard, such as referencing case history.

COINFECTIONS

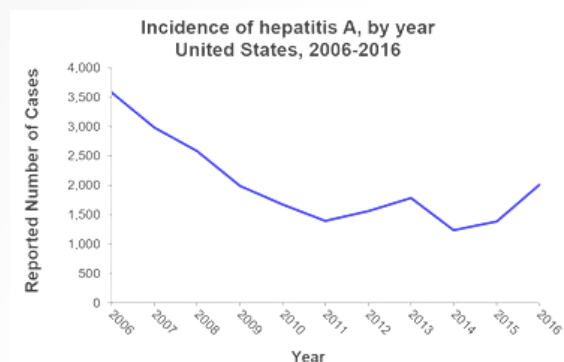


All those who test positive, and all those who fit the high-risk category above, should also be screened for **gonorrhea, chlamydia, and HIV**.

Sources: Case data is derived from the Oregon Public Health Epidemiologists User System, with rates supplemented by the Portland State University Population Research Center. General syphilis data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

DISEASE SPOTLIGHT: Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is a **highly infectious, potentially fatal disease**. Although sometimes associated with contaminated food, there is great concern about the potential for widespread outbreaks in the un-sheltered homeless population due to the crowding and lack of sanitation in camps. Spread via the fecal-oral route, these conditions can lead to very large outbreaks in a very short amount of time.



Sources: Graph and data come from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

After the introduction of a vaccine in the late 1990s, rates of infection declined steadily. Since 2016, however, over 20,000 cases have been reported nationwide. (And the CDC estimates twice as many cases actually occur than are reported.) Twenty-five states have reported outbreaks. The **average hospitalization rate for these outbreaks is over 50%**. The fatality rate is about 1%, with several outbreaks seeing fatalities rates up to 3%.

Active cases of Hep A in the region and Oregon remain low, with just 2 cases reported in the past decade. However, with the steady increase in un-sheltered homeless and the continued growth of large camps, it's important to remain vigilant. In addition, neighboring Washington is the focus of a **current outbreak** impacting four counties.

Infected persons can spread the disease 1-2 weeks before symptom onset, with symptoms occurring between 2 to 7 weeks following exposure. While there is no cure for Hepatitis A, it can be prevented with a vaccine.



Vaccinate! Those who are homeless, those who work with them, currently and recently incarcerated, drug users, men who have sex with men, and those who have other chronic liver conditions should all be vaccinated. School-aged children should also as part of the mandatory vaccine series. Children under the age of six are also not likely to be symptomatic after infection, increasing the likelihood of transmission.

MEASLES UPDATE

Measles is continuing to spread across the country. This year is the worst year for measles in the United States since 1992 with over 1000 cases in 28 states reported as of June 22. Four states have active outbreaks (New York, Pennsylvania, California, and Washington). Measles is an **EXTREMELY** contagious, potentially fatal disease; but it can easily be prevented with a vaccine! Large pockets of unvaccinated communities have been a major factor in most of the recent outbreaks reported in the US.

