

# Center for Gonorrhea Excellence

March 2023 | E-Newsletter

## Welcome!

The Center for Gonorrhea Excellence was established as part of the CDC-funded **Strengthening the U.S. Response to Resistant Gonorrhea**



(SURRG) grant in Indiana and has become a centralized repository of information on best practices related to management of *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* infections, especially as it relates to the threat of antibiotic resistant gonorrhea (ARGC).



The center also focuses on improving the quality of data pertaining to people diagnosed with gonorrhea, which will improve our understanding of the risk factors associated with acquiring gonorrhea and the healthcare seeking behaviors practiced by patients that have been diagnosed. These activities will be included in another CDC-funded project in Indiana, the **STD Surveillance Network (SSuN)** grant and will enhance our STD surveillance activities at the state and local level.

## Gonorrhea in the news— National Condom Month!

*This section includes national and international headlines relating to gonorrhea.*

### Strain of Gonorrhea with reduced susceptibility detected in Massachusetts

Two cases of a novel strain of *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* with genetic markers for reduced susceptibility to five antibiotics were detected in Massachusetts in January 2023. These patients were clinically cured using ceftriaxone— the current recommended treatment regimen for gonococcal infections— however these findings create concern for public health. Molecular testing illuminated that the susceptibility of this strain to ceftriaxone comes from a mutation in the *penA60* gene, making these cases the 2nd and 3rd of their kind to be detected in the United States. Treatment recommendations for gonococcal infections remain unchanged since 2021—a **single injection of ceftriaxone 500 mg intramuscularly**. [\[read more\]](#)

### Disseminated Gonorrhea Infection joins list of reportable diseases

As of January 2023, healthcare providers are required to report cases of disseminated gonorrhea infection (DGI) to the state health department. DGI is now listed along with the other reportable sexually-transmitted diseases in Indiana: Syphilis, uncomplicated gonococcal infections, chlamydia (including lymphogranuloma venereum, LGV), and chancroid. The Indiana Confidential Sexually Transmitted Disease Reporting form (in REDCap) now includes a field dedicated to disseminated infection. Risk factors have historically included female sex, pregnancy, and HIV infection, though reports in males have been increasing. [\[read more\]](#)

## Information hub

*The following sections provide specific resources available from the center as they pertain to best practices around gonorrhea. If you'd like to see more resources in these hubs, please let us know.*

### Did you know?

Your stash of condoms from the early 2010s may no longer offer protection against pregnancy or STIs! Over time, condom materials degrade and become brittle— AKA, more likely to break! **Check the expiration date on your box of condoms before use.**



## Provider resources



**Lets talk about sex!** Many healthcare workers struggle to know the best way to tackle taking a patient's sexual history. However, taking a comprehensive sexual history is integral to understanding a patient's health. Sexual history questions should go beyond "Do you use protection" and be inclusive of a patient's gender identity, sexual orientation, preferences, and more. The CDC Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD and TB prevention offers [A Guide to Taking a Sexual History](#) formulated specifically for the clinical environment.

## Data & surveillance: DGI in Indiana



Over the **last three years**, cases of DGI have increased drastically in Indiana. In 2020, there were 9 reported cases; 23 cases were reported in 2022— more than a **150% increase**. Some of the most commonly reported risk factors among last year's cases include **homelessness, methamphetamine use, and sharing needles/injection equipment or having sex with a known IDU**. Some of these factors overlap with the 2019 DGI outbreak in southwestern Michigan. With reporting being required for DGI now, the STD Surveillance team anticipates additional increases over the next few years.

### Recent ARGC and public health literature

- ◆ [Surveillance of Disseminated Gonococcal Infection, Active Bacterial Core Surveillance: United States 2015-2019](#)
- ◆ [International Travels and Transmission of Multidrug Resistant \*Neisseria Gonorrhoeae\* in Europe](#)
- ◆ [Resistance-minimizing Strategies for Introducing a Novel Antibiotic for Gonorrhea Treatment: a mathematical modeling study](#)

### Upcoming events

- ◆ [HCET/IDOH Phlebotomy Training: March 22nd, 2023](#)

### State & federal resources

- ◆ [STD Prevention website](#)
- ◆ [Center for Gonorrhea Excellence website](#)
- ◆ [CDC Division of STD Prevention](#)



## Community impact

In February 2023, the SURRG team welcomed frontline public health workers and leaders of local community-based organizations into the inaugural **Excellence in Gonorrhea Clinical Practices and Intervention (EGCPI) committee** for Indiana. The aim of the EGCPI committee is to strategically place experts in the field statewide who can promote clinical sexual health best practices and educate a wide audience — from medical professionals and public health officials to the general public, while addressing health disparities among those diagnosed with (or exposed to) gonorrhea.

This group will lead the charge when it comes to promoting best practices, be trained as subject matter experts in gonorrhea, and educate others on the complications the disease can bring to clinical practices and interventions.

These focus areas will be integrated into short- and long-term goals for the committee, with opportunities for members to directly contribute to the formation and execution of these goals within their local communities.

## Editor's desk



**Have news or literature you'd like to see featured?  
Have an event coming up you'd like to share?**

Contact the newsletter editor to submit for distribution.

**Editor:** Jamie Black  
[jamblack@health.in.gov](mailto:jamblack@health.in.gov)  
317-234-8981

To **promote**, **protect**, and **improve** the health and safety of all Hoosiers

