



Center for Gonorrhea Excellence

December 2023

Welcome!

The Center for Gonorrhea Excellence was established as part of the **Strengthening the U.S. Response to Resistant Gonorrhea (SURRG)** grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Indiana. It 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 sexually transmitted infection (STI) surveillance activities at the state and local levels.



CDC study highlights congenital syphilis and health system failures

According to a recent report, rates of congenital syphilis in the US have increased 755% from 2012 to 2021 (335 cases to 2,865 cases). This new report utilizes national data concerning maternal syphilis morbidity, staging, prenatal testing, documented treatment, and risk factors. The results show 88% of congenital syphilis cases resulting from missed opportunities for timely syphilis testing and adequate treatment in pregnancy. CDC notes that the role of missed prevention opportunities in congenital syphilis rates vary by geographic region and racial/ethnic group, suggesting that tailored prevention strategies may be most appropriate in mitigating this public health crisis. [\[read more\]](#)

Bicillin L-A shortage continues to impact sexual healthcare

In July 2023, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) added penicillin G benzathine injectable suspension products (Bicillin L-A) to its drug shortage list. This shortage poses special challenges to providers treating syphilis, as Bicillin L-A is the preferred treatment for syphilis cases of all stages, and the only safe treatment for pregnant patients. In light of this roadblock, the National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSN) has released the results of a survey concerning the impact of Bicillin L-A shortage on clinics in the U.S. cases rise across the United States. [\[read more\]](#)

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?

Of all antibiotic courses prescribed in U.S. doctor's offices and emergency departments annually, 28% are unnecessary.



Provider Resources:



Clinicians play an integral part in ensuring that the threat of antimicrobial existence does not grow. Public health and healthcare providers can work together to push for responsible antibiotic prescribing and use and initial prevention of infections predisposed to antibiotic resistance. For Antibiotic Awareness Week in November this year, the CDC highlighted health disparities associated with antibiotic resistant infections. More information on U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week can be found [here](#).

Data & Surveillance: IDOH Syphilis Dashboard is Live



The Indiana Department of Health STI Surveillance team recently published an STD Data Dashboard focused on visualization of timely syphilis data for the state of Indiana. Users can view overall case counts and filter by numerous factors such as stage of syphilis, patient race, sex of sex partners, county, and more. This dashboard includes relevant, weekly-updated data, designed to assist local partners in understanding the specific risk factors and key populations affected by syphilis in their area, available [here](#).

Recent ARGC and Public Health Literature

- [A Systematic Review of Kissing as a Risk Factor for Oropharyngeal Gonorrhea or Chlamydia](#)
- [Acceptance of a Future Gonorrhea Vaccine in a Post-COVID-19 World](#)
- [Health Equity and Antibiotic Prescribing in the United States: A Systematic Scoping Review](#)

Upcoming Events

- Jan. 9, 2024: [Cultivating Affirming Spaces for LGBTQ+ Youth with Dr. Jonah DeChants, the Trevor Project](#)

State & Federal Resources

- [STI prevention website](#)
- [Antibiotic Gonorrhea Resistance website](#)
- [CDC Division of STD Prevention](#)

Thank you, DIS!

Oct. 6 was National Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) Recognition Day. Many aspects of HIV/STI intervention could not be done without the hard work and expertise of DIS, from partner services to testing in the field. For those who are unfamiliar, DIS are public health professionals skilled in negotiation, problem solving, and communication. These skills are used to complete case investigations and contract tracing for HIV, syphilis, chlamydia and gonorrhea. A DIS can facilitate a linkage to care services, educate on HIV and STIs, provide prevention counseling, and play a pivotal role in outbreak response. When faced with challenging conversations, DIS perform their work with integrity, empathy, and professionalism.

Curious who your local DIS are? A map of DIS team contacts around the state can be found [here](#), linked on the IDOH STI Surveillance webpage.

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
317-234-8981

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

