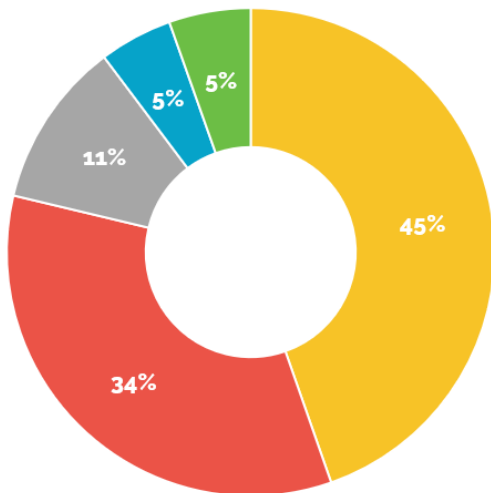


April 2022

## Gonorrhea and the Rise of Resistance

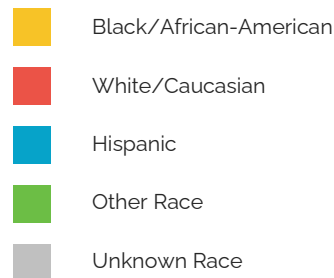
For 30 years, CDC has monitored antibiotic-resistant gonorrhea trends to help ensure that the recommended drug treatment for gonorrhea is working. Over time, *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* has evolved to develop **resistance to nearly all medications**. As of last year, we only have **one recommended regimen left**. In Indiana, STD surveillance staff work to enhance our state's capability to monitor trends and to respond timely to potential outbreaks of resistant gonorrhea in the future.

Not only are we battling the increasing threat of drug resistance, but we are also trying to curb the number of new infections each year. In newly released 2020 STD surveillance data, Indiana reported **over 14,000 gonorrhea cases** for the second year in a row. Cases were almost equally distributed among men and women, but seen more often among young adults **ages 19 to 25**.



### Gonorrhea by Race

Total number of gonorrhea cases in 2020, broken down by patient race.



## 2020 Fast Facts

- ~14,000 gonorrhea cases, **↑ 50% over five years**
- ~33,000 chlamydia cases, **↑ 7% over five years**
- ~1,300 syphilis cases. **↑ 75% over five years**
- Cases of syphilis **more than doubled among women** over the past 5 years.
- Proportionally **among men**, syphilis **increased most among heterosexual men** in the past 5 years (+75%).
- Over the last decade, IN reported an **average of four cases of congenital syphilis per year**. Preliminarily for **2021**, there are **20 cases**.

## Health Disparities

As seen in the figure above, gonorrhea cases in Indiana in 2020 were mostly seen among the Black/African-American population. This disparity is not seen among other STDs, like chlamydia and adult syphilis. Since younger, **Black patients are disproportionately affected by gonorrhea**, a disease that is becoming increasingly difficult to treat, it is important to ensure their access to care is frequently assessed to attempt to remove any barriers that would prevent them from acquiring comprehensive sexual health care.

## Treatment Changes

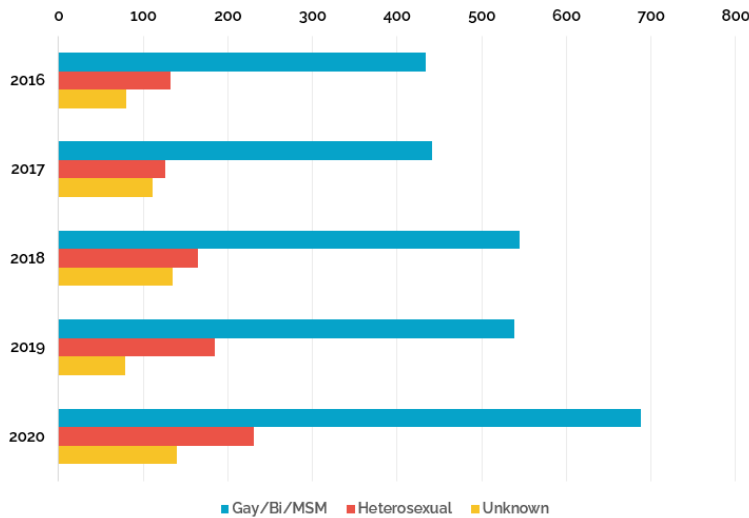
In 2021, CDC issued some significant changes to the recommendations regarding treatment of STDs. Data from Indiana's SURRG program indicated a **strain of gonorrhea that was completely resistant to azithromycin**; similar strains were seen in other states. This helped support the decision to remove it as one of the frontline drugs to treat gonorrhea. Now there is **only one drug (ceftriaxone) remaining**. Azithromycin was also removed from the chlamydia treatment regimen; it was replaced with a week-long regimen of doxycycline.

# Syphilis makes a historic change

Historically speaking, syphilis is seen mainly among men, especially those who have sex with other men. Seen in the figure below, this still continues to be the case in Indiana as of 2020. However, there has been **increasing numbers of syphilis infections among heterosexual men (and women)** over the last five years — a historic trend also being seen nationwide.

## Number of Adult Syphilis Cases in Indiana, 2020

Stratified by Male Sex, Grouped by Sexual Preference



## Pregnancy and Syphilis

In 2020, approximately **1 in 5 women** who had syphilis **were pregnant** during the course of their infection (n=52). Public health investigators attempt to ensure these women are treated adequately, and in a timely manner before they deliver, to ensure a congenital syphilis (CS) case is prevented. Also in 2020, the areas of the state that had the **highest proportion of pregnant** women among their female syphilis cases included **Allen County** and **Wayne County** — neither of which are the highest syphilis morbidity area in Indiana (Marion County).

## Congenital Syphilis Returns

At the beginning of the 2010s, Indiana had little to no congenital syphilis (CS) cases. However, the tide turned in 2019 and the number of cases reported mirrored the increases in adult syphilis cases among women and heterosexual men. Preliminary data from 2021 indicate **20 new cases** will be reported to CDC, with **9 cases** already for 2022. CS not only is diagnosed from the newborns' testing and symptomology, but is also diagnosed if the mother is not adequately treated in time.

**150%** Number of CS cases increased from 2020 to 2021

A majority of the cases in 2020 and 2021 were located in Marion County. Race of the mother was equally distributed between White and Black. Most cases were among Non-Hispanic mothers.

## CDC releases 2020 STD Surveillance Report

Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance, 2020 serves as a reminder that STDs remain a significant public health concern, even in the face of a pandemic. In 2020, COVID-19 significantly affected STD surveillance and prevention efforts. This report reflects the realities of a strained public health infrastructure, while simultaneously providing the most current data on reported cases of STDs in the United States. Trends presented in this report should be interpreted cautiously.

For additional information on STDs, Visit the CDC's website:

