

Gonorrhoea, syphilis on rise in England: UK health agency

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England saw a record number of gonorrhoea cases and the highest level of syphilis in decades last year as sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

spiked, the UK Health Security Agency said on Tuesday.

There were 82,592 [gonorrhoea](#) diagnoses in 2022, a yearly increase of 50 percent and the largest annual number reported since records began, according to the agency, known as the UKHSA.

Meanwhile infectious syphilis diagnoses increased to 8,692, a 15 percent rise and the biggest annual total since 1948, it noted.

More broadly, there were 392,453 new STIs detected among residents in England last year, a yearly increase of nearly a quarter.

It follows an uptick in cases in 2021, as numbers rebounded following the COVID pandemic which brought a drop-off in STIs due to lockdowns imposed during much of 2020.

"The numbers of consultations, sexual health screens and STI diagnoses in 2020 and 2021 are lower than preceding years, so the trend in diagnoses between 2021 and 2022 must be interpreted in that context," the UKHSA noted.

The rise in STIs has been most pronounced among [young people](#) aged 15 to 24, who accounted for the biggest proportion.

Gonorrhoea is increasing in people of all ages, but its spread was highest last year among that cohort, the agency said.

Infectious syphilis was on the rise both among gay, bisexual or other men who have sex with men, as well as heterosexual people, it added.

The agency stressed the importance of good sexual health practices, noting "condoms are the [best defense](#)" against STIs, while advocating regular testing.

Hamish Mohammed, consultant epidemiologist at UKHSA, said, "STIs aren't just an inconvenience—they can have a major impact on your health and that of any [sexual partners](#)."

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