

Alaska ranks No. 1 for chlamydia

May 5 2011, By Lisa Demer

Alaska again ranks first in the nation for chlamydia and is second for gonorrhea, state public health officials announced Tuesday.

The state has been first or second in reported rates of [chlamydia](#) every year since 2000, state public health officials said. Alaska's rate was again highest in the country in 2010, with 6,026 reported cases. That's 849 cases per 100,000 people, up 13 percent from 2009 and more than double the national rate for 2010, according to the state.

Also on the rise is gonorrhea, with 1,273 reported cases last year. The infection rate is up 23 percent from 2009, when Alaska was ninth. That year, [public health officials](#) began calling attention to a rapid increase in new cases in much of Alaska.

The state with the highest reported gonorrhea rate: Mississippi.

Symptoms of gonorrhea and chlamydia can be mild for some patients, who may not realize they are infected, said Susan Jones, Alaska's HIV/STD program manager. But left untreated, chlamydia is the leading cause of [infertility](#) in women, she said.

Health officials urge people who suspect they are infected to alert their [health care provider](#) as well as [sexual partners](#). Testing can be done through a [urine sample](#) or a swab, and the cure can be a single dose of an antibiotic. Some [health providers](#) are providing antibiotics to partners of infected patients, without first examining the partner, in an effort to control the epidemics.

Alaska's rates of these sexually transmitted diseases may be high because health officials try to investigate all reported cases and track down partners of infected patients, that is not routinely done in most other states, Jones said.

The vast majority of both chlamydia and gonorrhea cases occurs among people under age 30, Jones said. They are more likely to be sexually active, and have more partners, than older people.

To get tested, the state urges people to contact the local public health center, Planned Parenthood or an Alaska Native regional health corporation, or go to: www.iknowmine.org .

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