

Press release: London turns the tide on an 8 year surge of gonorrhoea

A new report released by Public Health England (PHE) shows new cases of gonorrhoea in Londoners dropped by 19% in 2016 compared with figures from the year before.

Gonorrhoea had been increasing year-on-year in the capital since 2009, and this reduction may be an encouraging sign that Londoners are getting tested for STIs more frequently and are practicing safe sex by using condoms.

Overall sexually transmitted infections (STIs) fell by 5% in London last year with decreases seen among most of the 5 major STIs. New cases of genital warts fell by 5% and cases of genital herpes dropped by 2%. But the data also comes with a note of caution as the number of syphilis diagnoses reported rose by 2% in 2016, double the number reported in 2012. Cases of chlamydia meanwhile, the most common STI, increased by 1%.

STIs remain an important public health problem in London, with the capital having the highest rate of new diagnoses in England, 79% higher than any other part of the country. Of the top 20 local authorities in England with the highest rates of new STI diagnoses, 17 were in London.

Overall in 2016, there were 117,600 new STIs diagnosed in London residents compared with more than 123,800 diagnosed in 2015.

Dr Yvonne Doyle, Regional Director for PHE London, said:

London has turned the tide on an 8 year surge of gonorrhoea with overall rates of STIs decreasing.

This encouraging news could show that work to promote frequent testing together with safe sex practices is paying off. This means people are using condoms and are regularly being tested.

However, the data comes with a note of caution. Poor sexual health remains a public health problem in London and STIs are still too high compared to other parts of the country, with rates of syphilis and chlamydia actually increasing.

Tackling poor sexual health remains high on the agenda for PHE London and we will continue to work with our partners to deliver effective public health interventions to improve sexual health outcomes across the capital.

To reduce the number of STIs, it is important that Londoners are familiar with PHE's recommendations for safe sexual health. These include getting tested every year and when changing sexual partner, as well as getting re-

tested after a positive chlamydia diagnosis (within 3 months of the diagnosis).

The [annual epidemiological spotlight on sexually transmitted infections in London \(2016 data\)](#) is available online.

You can view local data on sexual health via PHE's [Sexual Reproductive Health Profiles](#) online.

PHE published [annual data on STI diagnoses](#) in June 2017 and these are available online.

For safe sex, PHE recommends:

- prevention should focus on groups at highest risk, including young adults, men who have sex with men (MSM) and black ethnic minorities
- consistent and correct use of condoms can significantly reduce risk of infection
- regular testing for HIV and STIs is essential for good sexual health:
- anyone under 25 who is sexually active should be screened for chlamydia annually, and on change of sexual partner
- MSM should test annually for HIV and STIs and every 3 months if having condomless sex with new or casual partners

The London HIV Prevention Programme, a London-wide sexual health promotion initiative funded by London local authorities, delivers the 'Do It London' sexual health campaigns aimed at promoting safer sex to all residents in the capital including reducing risk of STIs.

The [London annual data spotlight report](#), presenting annual epidemiological data for HIV in London, is available online.

Rates of selected STIs per 100,000 population by London borough of residence: 2016 is available.

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