Know Your Status: STI Testing Information for USF Students

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Introduction

The rising rate of STIs among young people is a serious problem that has to be addressed in today's age of instantaneous communication and shifting norms towards romantic partnerships and sexual health. The incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as syphilis, gonorrhoea, and chlamydia has been on the rise nationally, in the state of Florida, and in Hillsborough County, with a notable spike among those aged 20–24 (Belenko et al.)

This study should be seen as a call to arms, an impassioned plea to do something about this dangerous trend. It's a call to action for all of us to prioritize our own sexual health by scheduling frequent STI screenings. By doing so, we protect not only our own health but also that of our neighbours and aid in the larger battle against the spread of sexually transmitted infections.

In the next pages, we'll look at the statistics that back up the importance of this problem. Important information about where and how to be tested for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) on campus and in the surrounding area will be provided. We will also explain why consistent testing is so crucial and provide recommendations for best practices.

Understanding the STI Epidemic

National Trends: US

The syphilis figures in this section are rates per 100,000 people, not percentages. The total reported syphilis rate was 12.3 cases per 100,000 people in 2006 and 35.2 per 100,000 in 2018. It increased to approximately 53.3 per 100,000 in 2021. CDC provisional data report a total syphilis rate of about 55.9 cases per 100,000 in 2024. These data demonstrate a serious long-term increase, although the annual rate can fluctuate.

Gonorrhoea incidence rates per 100,000 people have likewise been increasing, but with some variation. A peak of 119.7 in 2006 was followed by a steady decline until circa 2010. After that, it started rising again. The gonorrhoea rate in 2021 was 214, a significant increase over the previous

decade.

There has been a steady increase in the chlamydia infection rate expressed as a rate per 100,000 people. Starting at a pace of 344.3 in 2006, it has risen every year afterwards. The chlamydia rate in 2021 reached 495.4, indicating a steep rise in the number of new infections.

An alarming rise in syphilis, gonorrhoea, and chlamydia infections has been documented over the last decade in the United States. There has been a significant upsurge in the incidence of all three STIs, highlighting the need of education, prevention, and routine testing.

1.2 State of FloridaTop of Form

The reported syphilis rate in Florida, measured as cases per 100,000 residents, climbed during the period discussed, with some fluctuations. It nearly tripled between 2006 and 2018, reaching 13.8 cases per 100,000 by 2018 compared with about 4 per 100,000 earlier in the period. In 2021, the rate rose to 20.4 per 100,000. Similarly, the rate of newly diagnosed gonorrhoea cases per 100,000 residents increased, although with significant variation. Although it had reached 134.6 per 100,000 in 2006, the rate gradually decreased over the following years, leveling off around 2010, and then began to rise again. The gonorrhoea rate in 2021 was 203.6 per 100,000. The reported chlamydia figures are also rates per 100,000 people rather than percentages. The rate discussed in the source material rose from 344.3 per 100,000 in 2006 to 495.4 per 100,000 in 2021.

1.3 Hillsborough County

The number of reported cases of syphilis, gonorrhoea, and chlamydia in Hillsborough County has increased dramatically over the last decade, and this has caused serious concerns. Increased rates of all three STIs in the state emphasize the need of awareness campaigns, preventative measures, and regular screenings. Since the most recent data suggests that the highest occurrence of these STIs occurred around this time period, there is an urgent need to treat them in Hillsborough.

We hope that by providing this information in an easy way, we will encourage USF students to take care of their sexual health and get tested for STIs on campus. Frequent testing not only safeguards people, but also helps maintain a secure and healthy campus. Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the University of South Florida’s (USF) convenient and private testing options.

Conclusion

In conclusion, taking care of your sexual health is important since it affects other aspects of your health. According to the statistics shown earlier in this article, the prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among young people aged 20–24 has been steadily increasing throughout the

country and in the state of Florida. This highlights the vital significance of STI testing on a frequent basis. Knowledge, as they say, is power. Your ability to make educated choices and exhibit responsible behaviour about your sexual health depends on knowing your STI status. Your individual health and the health of our USF community benefit from your commitment to regular testing. All of you are strongly urged to take use of the on-campus testing facilities. By taking this easy but vital precaution, you are not only looking out for yourself, but also helping to make USF a healthier and safer place for everyone.

Work Cited

Belenko, Steven, et al. “Detecting, preventing, and treating sexually transmitted diseases among adolescent arrestees: An unmet public health need.” *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 99, no. 6, 2009, pp. 1032–1041, https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2007.122937.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Sexually Transmitted Infections Surveillance*. https://www.cdc.gov/sti-statistics/annual/index.html