



Charlie Crist
Governor

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State Surgeon General

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THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH REMINDS FLORIDIANS TO DISCUSS STD PREVENTION WITH A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

TALLAHASSEE – In Florida, 266 sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are reported every day, 11 cases every hour and one case every 5.42 minutes, according to 2008 data. Approximately 66 percent (64,129) of the cases occurred among individuals between the ages of 15-24.

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) reminds Floridians that these STDs if untreated may cause long-term health affects including infertility, low birth weight, pelvic inflammatory disease, neurological damage, and the spread of infection to others. Viral STDs like herpes simplex virus, which have no cure, cause a life long impact on physical, psychological and emotional health. STD-related consequences may be avoided through education, early detection and proper treatment.

“STDs pose substantial public health challenges that must be met with a comprehensive approach that is built on education, collaboration and innovation,” said Karla Schmitt, Ph.D., M.P.H., A.R.N.P., Bureau Chief of the STD Prevention and Control Program.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), STDs cost the United States health care system as much as \$15.5 billion annually. Most STDs are easily diagnosed and treated, but they often have no symptoms and go undetected. When not treated, they often result in significant costs to our health care system.

STDs include human papillomavirus (HPV), chlamydia, gonorrhea, trichomoniasis, syphilis and HIV. These diseases continue to be the most commonly reported infectious diseases in the nation. Approximately 19 million new sexually transmitted infections occur every year in the United States, and almost half of these are among young people aged 15 to 24. For 2008, Florida provisionally reported nearly 97,000 cases of sexually transmitted infections. Additionally, during 2008, roughly 10,800 maternal records were created where the mother was identified as infected with syphilis, gonorrhea or chlamydia. For the same period, 43 infants younger than one year were diagnosed with an STD.

The 2009 STD Awareness Campaign presents 3T's to prevent the spread of STDs:

- **Talk:** Talk to your partner and your health care provider about risk factors, safer sex methods and testing
- **Test:** Make an appointment for STD testing
- **Treat:** Treat the disease and avoid additional health problems

DOH promotes, protects and improves the health of all people in Florida. DOH provides confidential counseling, testing, treatment and education. For more information about STD Awareness Month activities planned statewide, visit the DOH Bureau of STD Prevention and Control's website at www.doh.state.fl.us/Disease_ctr/std/index.html.



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Editor's Note: April is STD Awareness Month.

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