

Sexually Transmitted Disease Report 2018-19

Meriden Department of Health and Human Services

ABOUT SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

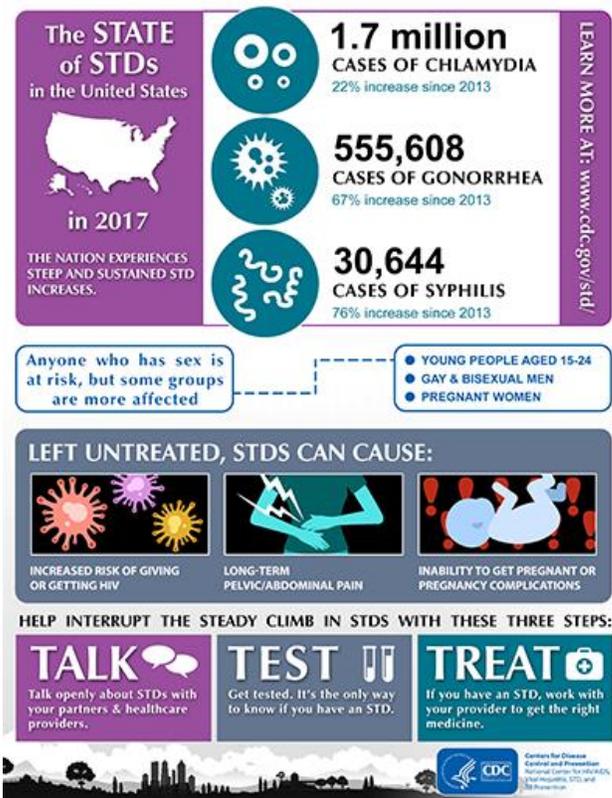
Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are caused by bacteria or viruses that are transmitted through unprotected sexual contact. STDs can happen to anyone, no matter their age, race, gender, or sexual orientation. Symptoms of an STD vary, and many do not have any symptoms or have symptoms that are easily ignored or mistaken for another illness. The terms sexually transmitted diseases and sexually transmitted infections are often interchangeably used; for this report the term sexually transmitted diseases or STDs for short will be used.

STDs take a particularly heavy toll on young people. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that youth ages 15 to 24 make up just over one quarter of the sexually active population, but account for half of the 20 million new sexually transmitted infections that occur in the United States each year. Having an undiagnosed STD can lead to further complications such as infertility.

Many STDs are considered reportable diseases. This means that local health departments get a report when these conditions are diagnosed by a healthcare provider. Cases of Hepatitis C are also reported on the CT Electronic Disease Surveillance System (CT EDSS), which our office monitors twice per day. From these reports our Department is able to conduct surveillance to monitor trends and recommend evidence-based prevention and risk reduction programs to our community.

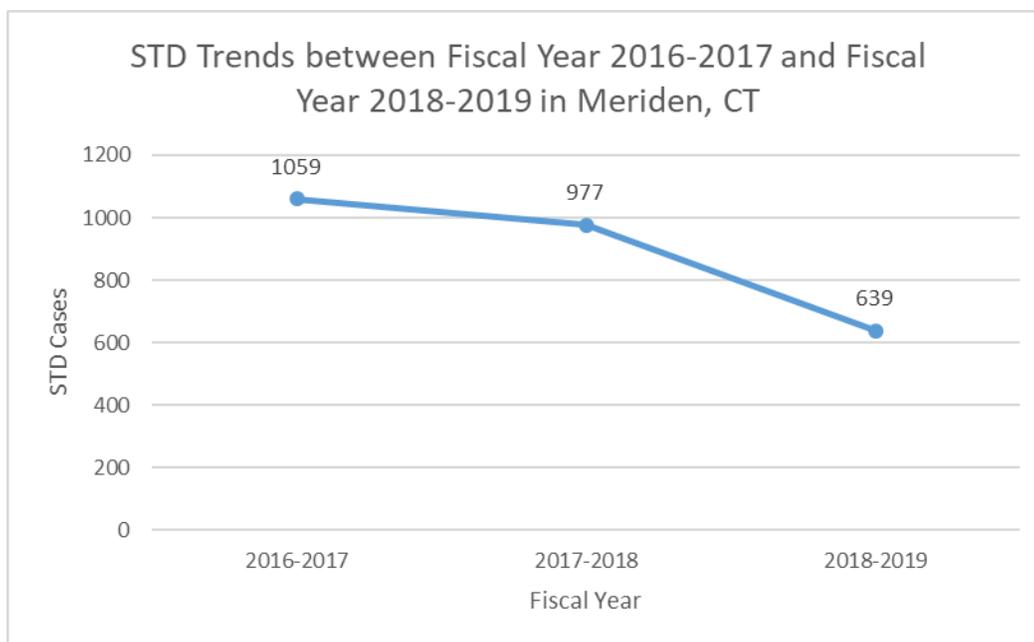
In July 2018 our office started a surveillance project on our STD reports. We broke down data based on type of STD, gender, and age groups. Cases of Hepatitis B and C are also included. This report is the culmination of 1 year of surveillance (July 2018 through June 2019).

In total, we received 639 reports. This is a significant decrease from 2016-2017 (1059 cases) and 2017-2018 (977 cases). It is important to note that undiagnosed cases are not included in this report, nor are confirmed cases that we did not receive a paper report on.



The State of STDs in the United States (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018)

Cases are documented in the month that the Department received them rather than the month that they were diagnosed by a healthcare provider. This report will not break down any data counts on disease with less than 10 cases.

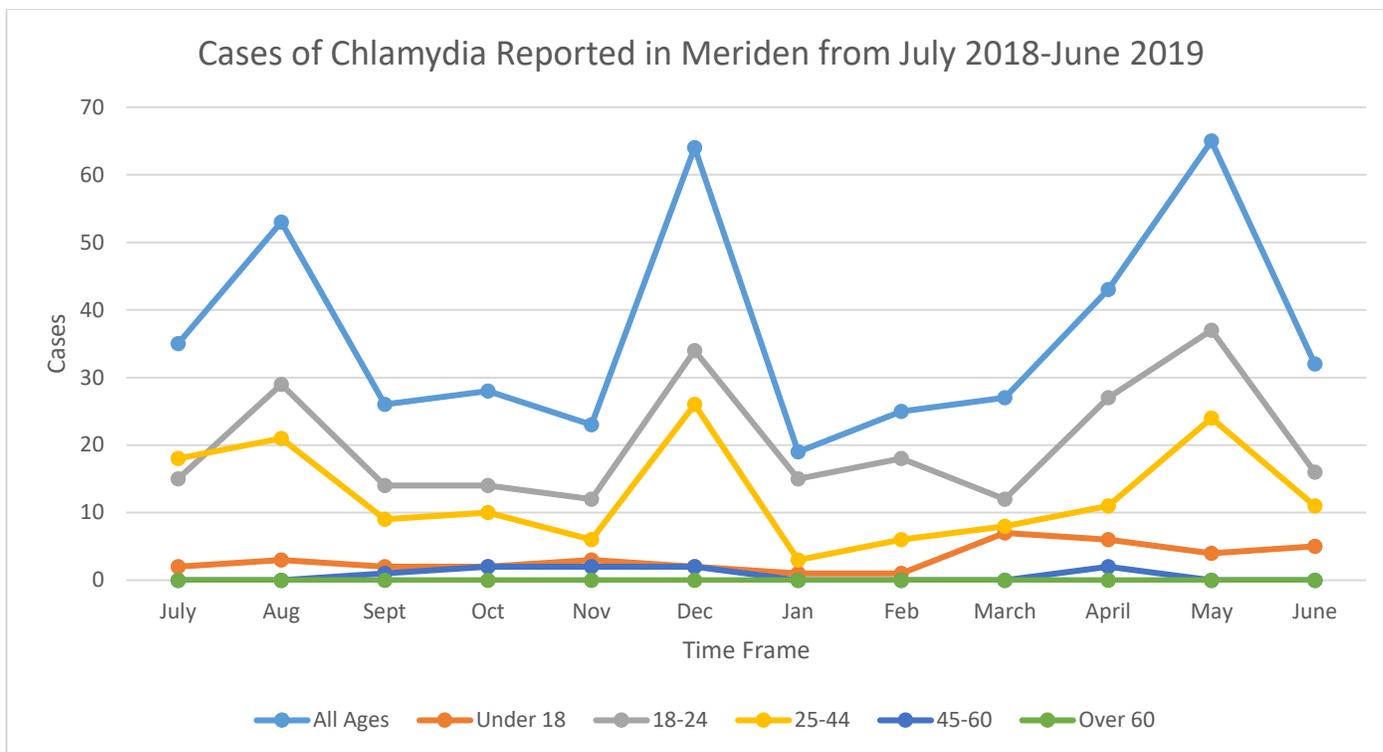


CHLAMYDIA, GONORRHEA, AND SYPHILIS

Chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis are three of the most common STDs. Cases are on the rise across the United States.

Chlamydia is caused by bacteria and can be treated with antibiotics. Symptoms may include abnormal discharge from the penis or vagina and a burning sensation when urinating. Men can also experience pain and swelling in their testicles. Many people do not have symptoms when they have Chlamydia. Women who do not get treated may experience reproductive problems such as infertility, pelvic pain, and ectopic pregnancy. Chlamydia can be transmitted to a baby during birth (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014).

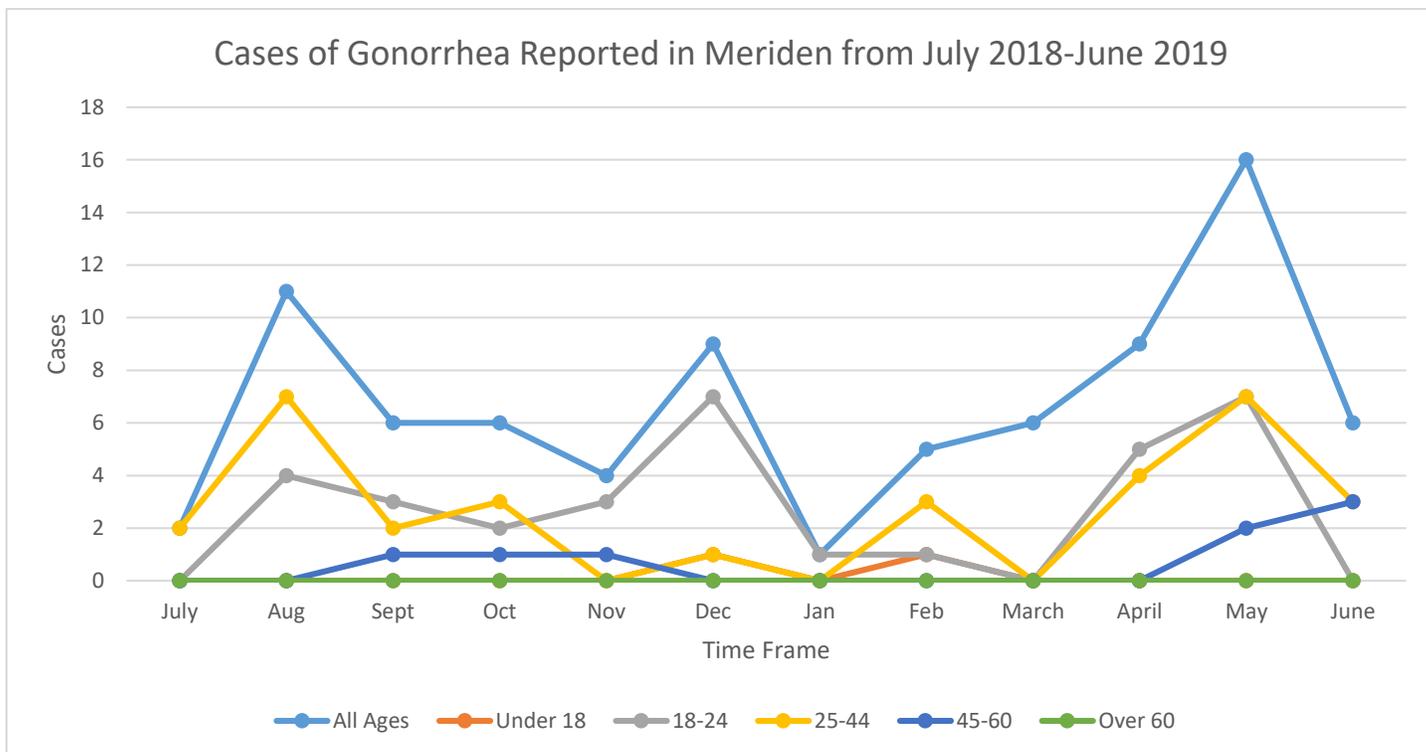
There were 312 cases of Chlamydia in Meriden in 2015 (Connecticut Department of Public Health, 2015). The number of cases in Meriden increased during the following years, with 440 cases between July 2018 and June 2019. The majority were in females (289, or 66%) and 151 (or 44%) were in males. Additionally, most of the cases were seen in people between the ages of 18 and 24 years. This age group accounted for 243 (55%) of all cases. People between the ages of 25 and 44 made up the next largest number of cases with 153 (35%).



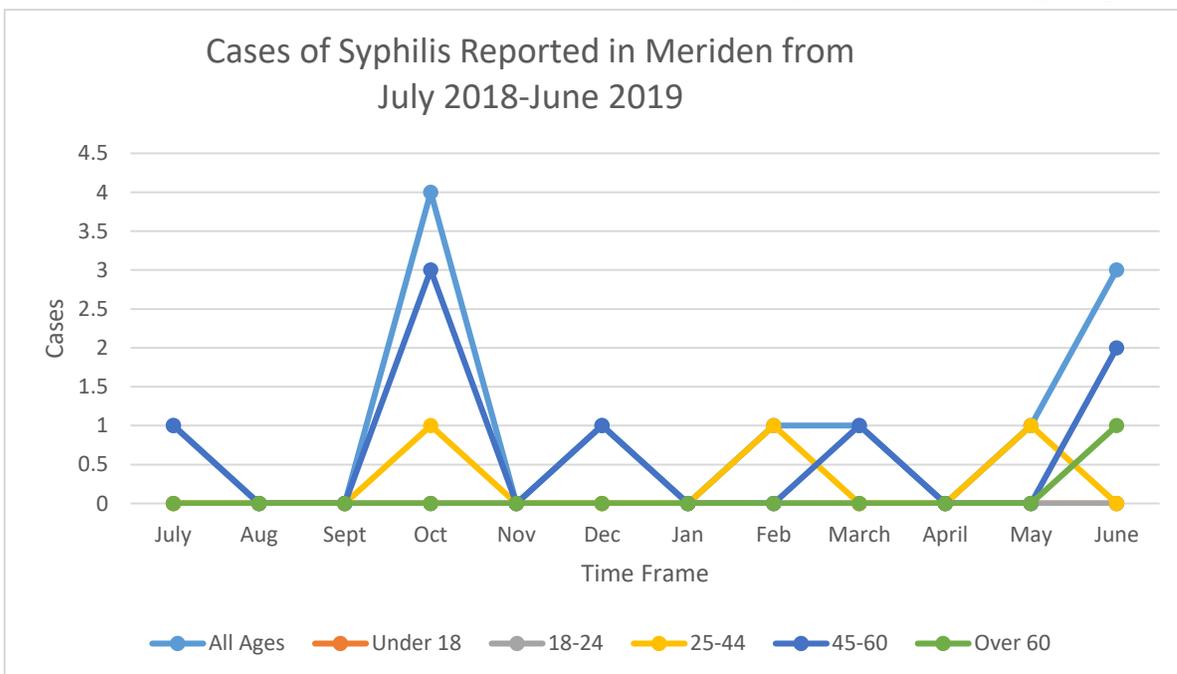
Gonorrhea is caused by bacteria and can be treated with antibiotics. Symptoms in women include pain while urinating, unusual vaginal discharge, and bleeding from the vagina between periods. Males may have pain when urinating, discharge from the penis, and pain or swelling in their testicles.

People may not show symptoms (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014). If women go untreated, they may experience infertility, ectopic pregnancy, scarring on their fallopian tubes, and pelvic pain. They may also give the infection to their baby when they give birth. If men go untreated they may develop a condition of the tubes attached to the testicles or may become infertile (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014).

In 2015, there were 40 cases of Gonorrhea in Meriden (Connecticut Department of Public Health, 2015). Cases increased to 81 between July 2018 and June 2019. The majority were in males (46, or 57%). Cases were most common in those between the ages of 18 and 44, with 33 cases in people between the ages of 18 and 24 and 32 cases in individuals aged 25 to 44. They accounted for 41% and 40% of cases in Meriden, respectively.



Syphilis is caused by bacteria and can be treated by antibiotics. This condition is separated into four stages that each have their own signs and symptoms. Syphilis can be very dangerous when left untreated because it can spread to the heart, blood vessels, brain, and nervous system. It can damage organs and cause blindness

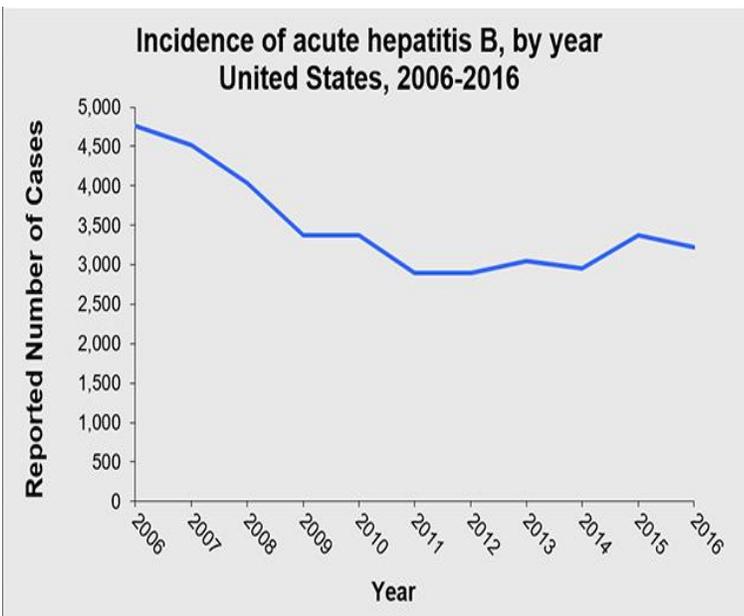


or death (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017).

Meriden did not have any reported cases of Syphilis in 2015 (Connecticut Department of Public Health, 2015). Between July 2018 and June 2019, there were 12 cases reported.

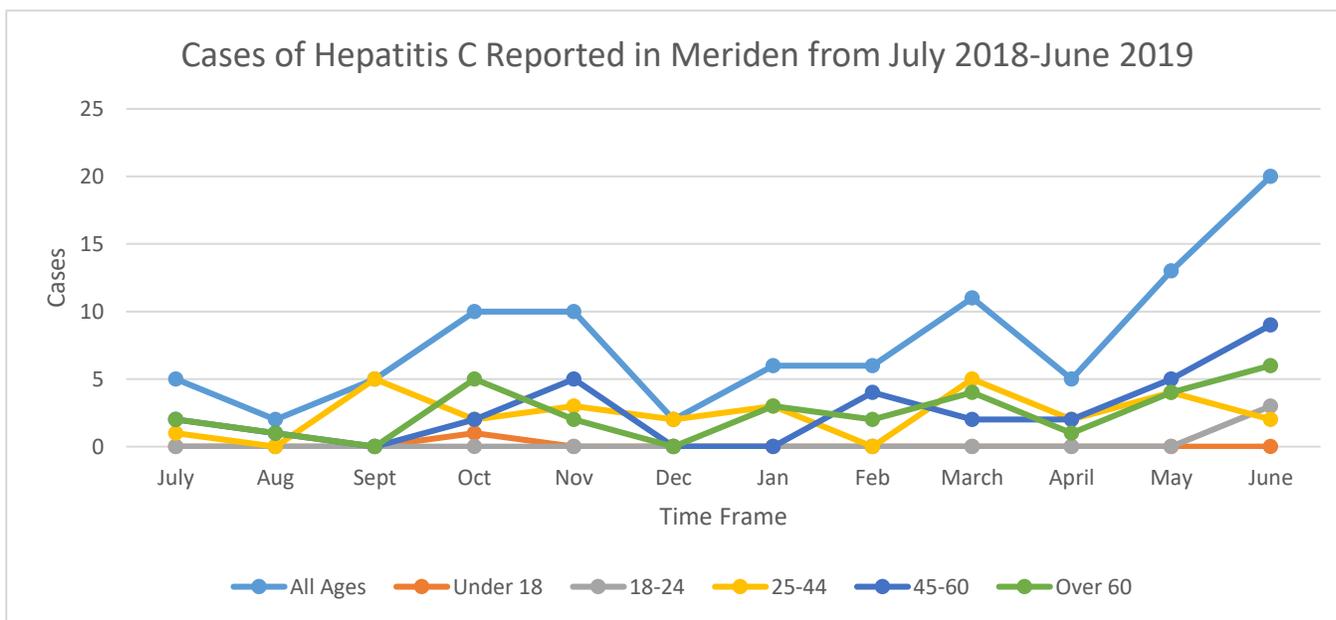
HEPATITIS B AND C

Hepatitis B is a viral liver infection. People can get Hepatitis B through sex or coming in contact with the blood of an infected person. It can also be passed on to a baby during childbirth (Planned Parenthood). There is no cure for Hepatitis B, but there is a vaccine to prevent it. In many people, Hepatitis B does not present symptoms and goes away on its own. Other people may get symptoms such as yellowing of the skin and eyes, fever, dark urine, fever, and more (Planned Parenthood of Southern New England).



The number of cases of Hepatitis B in Meriden between July 2018 and June 2019 was too low to analyze. This graph shows the incidence of Hepatitis B in the United States between 2006 and 2010 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018).

Hepatitis C is a viral liver infection that is spread through blood. Most people get Hepatitis C by sharing injection drug equipment. It can be spread through sex with someone who is infected, but this is not as common. The condition can be spread to a baby during birth. Some symptoms include jaundice, dark urine, fatigue, nausea and vomiting, and others. There is no cure for Hepatitis C (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019).



There were 95 cases of Hepatitis C in Meriden between July 2018 and June 2019. The majority of cases were in those between the ages of 25 and 44.

PREVENTING STDS

There are some things you can do to reduce your risk of getting an STD.

- **Practice abstinence** – Abstinence, or not having sex, is the only way to guarantee that you will not get an STD. This includes vaginal, anal, and oral sex.
- **Use condoms** – Using a latex condom can reduce the risk of getting an STD. Some STDs, such as herpes or HPV, can still be transmitted through skin-to-skin contact.
- **Reduce your number of sexual partners** – Having one sexual partner who only has sex with you can help avoid STDs if both people have been tested and do not have an STD.
- **Talk to your partner** – Communicating before sex is important. Talk about topics like safe sex and getting tested.
- **Get vaccinated** – There are vaccines that prevent some STDs, such as HPV and hepatitis B.
- **Get tested** – It is important to know your status. If you do have an STD, this lets you get treated early and helps to prevent you from spreading it to others (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.).

LOCAL ACTION

Professional Development for Teachers: On October 5, 2018, a professional development training was held on the new *“Be Proud! Be Responsible!”* curriculum for Meriden Health and Physical Education teachers who would be teaching the new in their classrooms. This evidence-based curriculum provides sexual health education to at-risk youth using interactive lessons (Maselli, 2018). The program aims to influence youth to make positive behavior changes that lower their risk for contracting STIs and HIV, as well as preventing pregnancy. It also provides them the skills needed to make these behavior changes (Sweet Jemmott, Jemmott III, & McCaffree).

This program has success in other areas of Connecticut. 47% of individuals who participated in the 2018 program stated that they were much or somewhat less likely to have sex in the next six months due to the program. 77% of participants who did intend to have sex in the next six months reported that due to the program, they were much or somewhat more likely to use a condom. About 70% of participants who intended to have sex in the next six months also reported that due to the program, they would be much or somewhat more likely to use methods of birth control (Partners in Social Research, LLC, 2018).

Free Condoms: The Meriden Department of Health and Human Services provides free condoms in the Clinic office. Staff can also refer the public to local STD testing locations.

STD Testing: While the Meriden Department of Health and Human services does not provide STD testing, there are locations in Meriden that offer this service.

The Planned Parenthood in Meriden offers testing for STDs. They are located at 26 Women’s Way, (203) 238-0542. To learn more, please visit their website - <https://www.plannedparenthood.org>. To find other places to get tested in Connecticut, please visit <https://gettested.cdc.gov>.

BEST PRACTICES AND PREVENTION CAMPAIGNS

#LeaveItToUs

The Connecticut Department of Public Health developed a video campaign titled *#LeaveItToUs*. This campaign aims to stop the spread of STDs by encouraging people to make sure their partner is informed of their STD status. Trained staff will confidentially reach out to partners of the person with the STI on their behalf and discuss testing and other resources. To learn more about the program please visit <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Infectious-Diseases/STD/Sexually-Transmitted-Diseases-Control-Program>.

Health Education Videos

The Planned Parenthood Federation of America created three videos with the goal of increasing the self-efficacy of young people by modeling how to communicate several crucial aspects of safer sex, such as discussing practicing safer sex, getting tested, and disclosing an STI. They also developed lesson plans to go along with these videos. Please visit <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/for-educators/digital-tools> to view the videos and other resources.

GET REAL

Get Real is a three-year educational program targeting middle school students, developed by Planned Parenthood of Massachusetts. A one-year program designed for high school students is also provided. Students will learn the social and emotional skills needed to aid them in responsible decision making. They will learn to develop decision making models for real-life scenarios and be encouraged to speak with their families and communities about sexual health. *Get Real* uses social and emotional learning to guide its program. It is also based on a Behavior/Determinant/Intervention logic model. The behavior is delaying sexual activity and the consistent use of condoms and other forms of contraceptives. The lessons then target the determinants of that behavior, such as what factors may put someone at risk of engaging in the behavior. One evaluation of this program found that 16% fewer males and 15% fewer females who participated in the *Get Real* program had sexual intercourse by the end of the 8th grade compared to those who didn't participate in the program. The program also improved communication skills.

OTHER RESOURCES:

To find other best practices to promote safe sexual health, please visit:

- CT Department of Public Health STD Control Program – <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Infectious-Diseases/STD/Sexually-Transmitted-Diseases-Control-Program>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - <https://www.cdc.gov/std/program/interventions.htm>
- Resource Center for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention - <http://recapp.etr.org/RECAPP/index.cfm?fuseaction=pages.ebphome>
- National Public Health Information Coalition - <https://www.nphic.org/toolkits/std#public>
- Healthy People 2020 - <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/sexually-transmitted-diseases>

THANK YOU

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