

# Sexual Health

Among American Indian Adults and Adolescents in New Mexico



This fact sheet focuses on sexual health data for sexually active American Indian and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) adults and adolescents in New Mexico. Data for sexual health risk and resiliency behaviors for adults are collected by the New Mexico Department of Health, the Indian Health Service, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## What is

## Sexual Health?

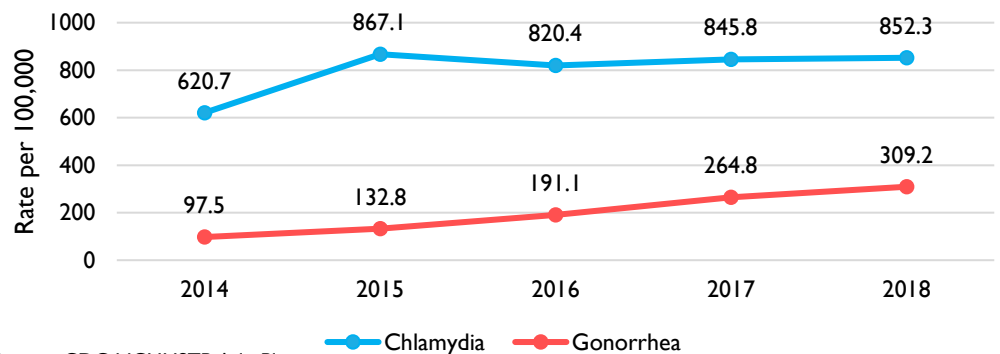
The World Health Organization (WHO), defines sexual health as a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination, and violence.

Gonorrhea and chlamydia are sexually transmitted bacterial infections. Between 2015 and 2018, the rate of chlamydia has remained relatively constant.

The gonorrhea case rate has increased from 97.5/100,000 in 2014 to 309.2/100,000 in 2018.

The lowest case rates of both gonorrhea and chlamydia occurred in 2014.

### Chlamydia and Gonorrhea Rates among AI/AN in New Mexico, 2014-2018



Source: CDC NCHHSTP AtlasPlus



In New Mexico, **1.6 per 100,000 deaths** among American Indians/Alaska Natives were **attributable to HIV**.

In 2018, **45%** of American Indian/Alaska Native adults reported **ever being tested for HIV** (BRFSS, New Mexico).



## How to reduce your risk of contracting an STI



Get vaccinated against HPV and Hepatitis B.



Use condoms and other barriers when engaging in sexual activity.



Get tested regularly for HIV and other STIs.



Reduce number of sexual partners



Talk to your partner about protection and STIs.

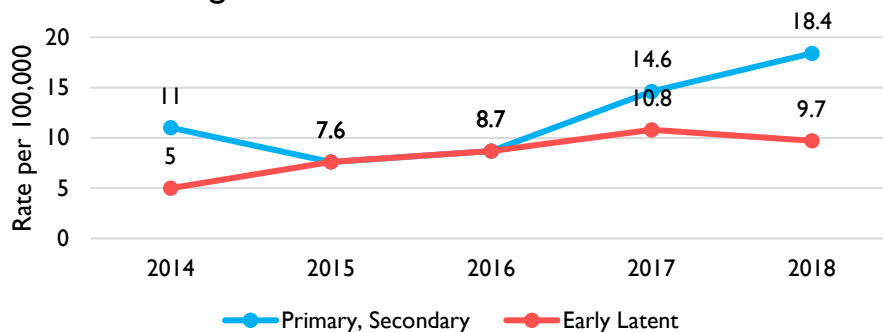
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Syphilis is a bacterial infection typically transmitted via sexual contact. If left untreated, syphilis can lead to serious complications, including damage to the heart, brain, or other organs. Syphilis can also be transmitted from mother to infant during birth or through the placenta, causing congenital syphilis. While most infants with congenital syphilis have no symptoms, it can lead to serious birth defects, stillbirth, and premature birth. Since 2015, the rate of syphilis among AI/AN has increased steadily.

## Primary, Secondary, and Early Latent Syphilis among AI/AN in New Mexico, 2014 - 2018



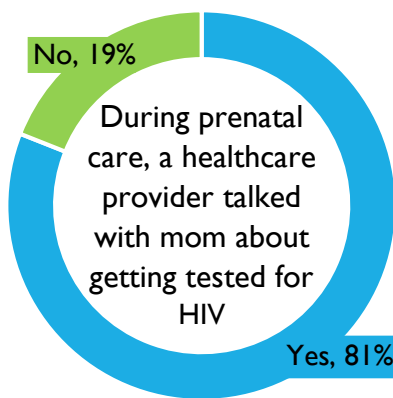
Source: CDC NCHHSTP AtlasPlus



Women who are pregnant can become infected with Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). STIs can put women, their infants, and their partners at risk during the perinatal period. STIs can also impact reproductive health, including fertility. It is critical that STI testing and treatment are integrated into prenatal care to keep women and their newborns healthy and safe.



Among American Indian/Alaska Native moms who gave birth in 2015, **72.4% reported getting an HIV test** during their most recent pregnancy.



In 2019, New Mexico had the **8<sup>th</sup> highest rate of congenital syphilis**, with **23 active cases** of congenital syphilis statewide.

Hepatitis C Virus is a viral infection that affects the liver. It is a bloodborne infection and can be transmitted through sexual contact or through sharing needles.

Nationally, Hepatitis C Virus occurs among American Indians/Alaska Natives at a rate of **3.6 cases per 100,000 people** (CDC, 2018).

### References:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. NCHHSTP AtlasPlus. Updated 2019. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/atlas/index.htm>. Accessed on August 26, 2020.
- World Health Organization. "Defining Sexual Health" Updated 2019. [https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/sexual\\_health/sh\\_definitions/en/](https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/sexual_health/sh_definitions/en/). Accessed on March 1, 2020.
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- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Viral Hepatitis. Updated October 22, 2019. <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hcv/>
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