

# Sexually Transmitted Infections

## Los Angeles County, 2021

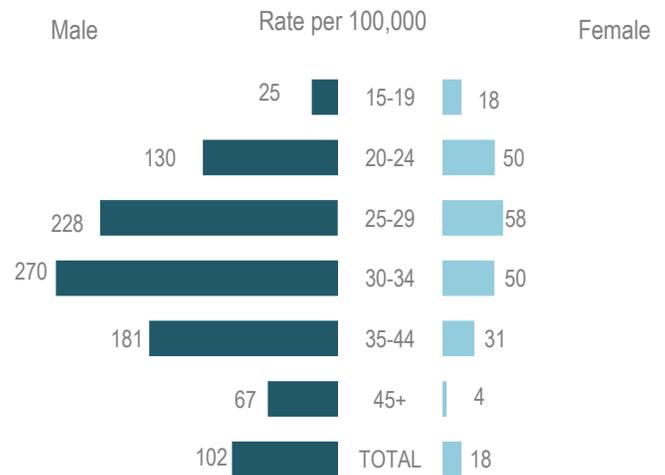
Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) continue rise in Los Angeles County (LAC). Over a decade long trend continued in 2021 with a total of 91,013 cases of STIs reported to the LAC Department of Public Health. Chlamydia accounted for most of the reported cases (58%), followed by gonorrhea (31%) and syphilis (10%). Sixty-one percent of all syphilis cases were early syphilis. Data do not include Long Beach and Pasadena.<sup>1,2</sup>

### EARLY SYPHILIS

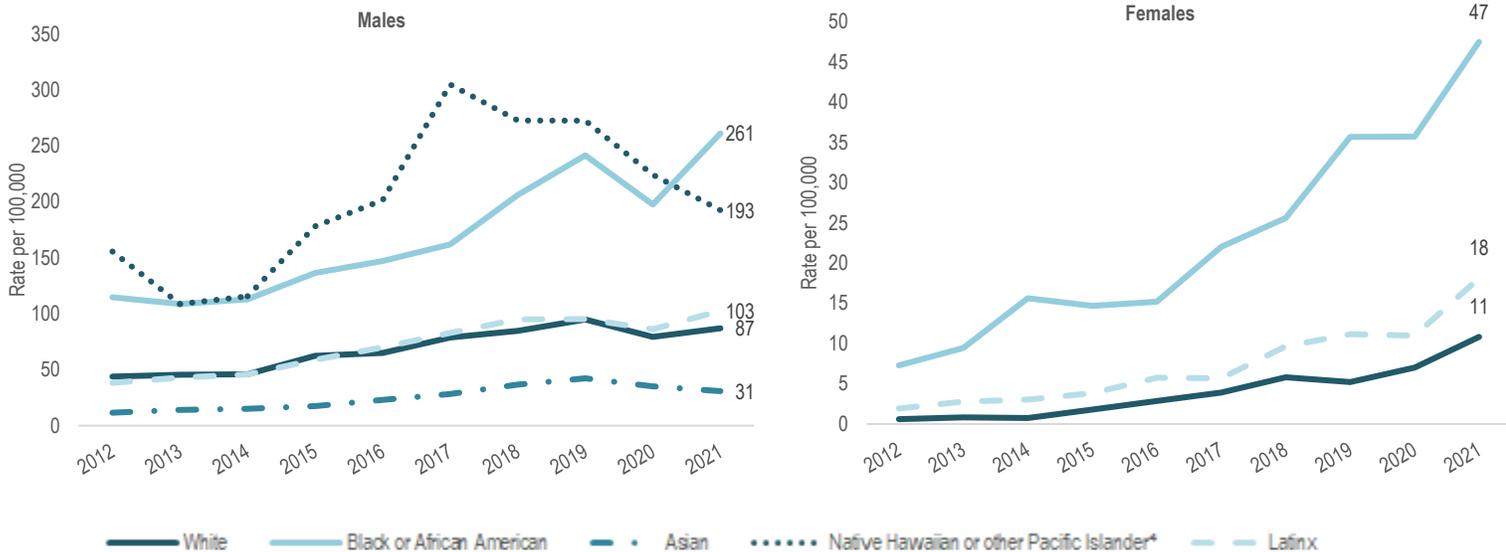
**Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection caused by the bacteria, *Treponema pallidum* and is a known risk factor for HIV. If untreated it can cause significant health issues including damage to the brain, nerves, eyes, or heart. Early syphilis includes the infectious stages of syphilis infection.**

In 2021, the rate of newly reported early syphilis cases was 62 per 100,000 but rates among males were more than 5 times higher than females (102 vs. 18 per 100,000, respectively). Males aged 30-34 years and females aged 25-29 had the highest overall rates compared with other age groups (270 and 58 per 100,000, respectively). Transgender individuals represented 3.4% of all early syphilis cases.<sup>3</sup> African Americans and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders (NHPI) had the highest rates of early syphilis for males (261 and 193 per 100,000, respectively) and African American females had the highest rates at 47 per 100,000. Syphilis rates were unstable for American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) males, and AIAN, NHPI and Asian females due to a small number of cases and therefore rates are not presented.

Early Syphilis Rates by Gender and Age Group, 2021



Early Syphilis Rates by Gender and Race/Ethnicity, 2012-2021



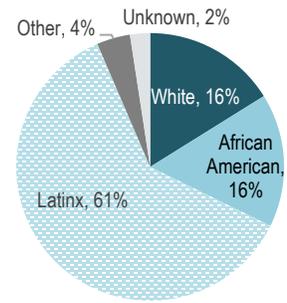
1. Data sources: LAC Division of HIV and STD Programs; California Department of Public Health STD Control Branch. Data are provisional due to reporting delays. Racial/ethnic groups not shown included unstable rates due to small numbers.
2. In 2020, there was a noted decrease in STD reporting due to clinic closures and decreased screening during COVID-19 stay at home orders. All 2020 data presented in this snapshot should be viewed with caution.
3. Transgender women represented 3.4% of all early syphilis cases, 0.9% of all gonorrhea cases, and 0.4% of all chlamydia cases. Transgender rates cannot be calculated due to the lack of population size estimates.
4. Note that 2013 and 2014 rates for Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander males are unstable due to small numbers.

# CONGENITAL SYPHILIS

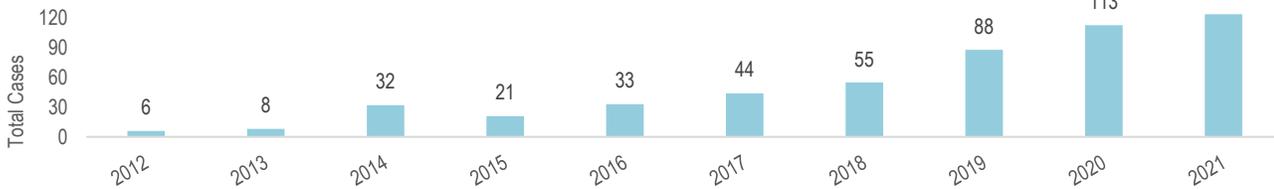
**Congenital syphilis is a multi-system infection caused by the bacteria, *Treponema pallidum*, in a fetus or infant, acquired during pregnancy. It can cause preterm birth, miscarriage, or stillbirth. It can also lead to serious birth defects.**

A total of 124 cases of congenital syphilis were reported in 2021, reflecting a continued surge in disease incidence. Since 2012, reported congenital syphilis cases have increased more than 20-fold. Latinx females represented more than a half of all mothers (61%) with congenital syphilis babies while White and African American mothers represented 16% each.

**Congenital Syphilis Cases by Race/Ethnicity of Mothers, 2021**



**Congenital Syphilis Cases, 2012-2021**

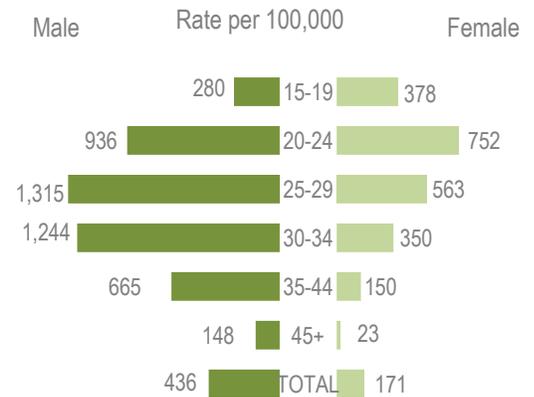


# GONORRHEA

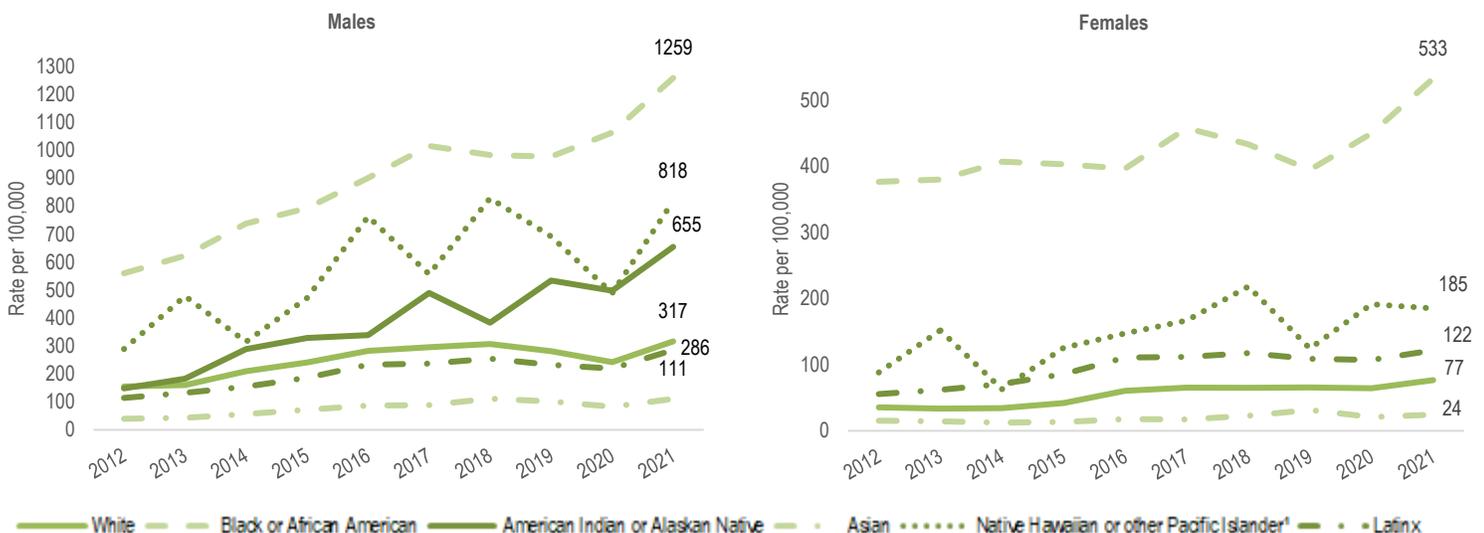
**Gonorrhea is caused by the bacteria *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* and is one of the most commonly reported sexually transmitted infections in Los Angeles County. It can cause infection in the genitals, rectum, and throat. If untreated, gonorrhea can cause serious health problems including infertility for men and women. It may also increase the risk of HIV infection. Though gonorrhea is treatable, it has progressively developed resistance to the antibiotic drugs prescribed for treatment.**

In 2021, 28,463 gonorrhea cases were reported to LAC, reflecting a rate of 305 per 100,000. Rates among males were more than two times higher than females in 2021 (436 vs. 171 per 100,000, respectively) and transgender individuals represented 0.9% of the gonorrhea cases.<sup>3</sup> By age, rates were highest among males aged 25-29 years and females aged 20-24 years (1,315 and 752 per 100,000, respectively). African American males and females had the highest rates compared with other race/ethnicities (1,259 and 533 per 100,000, respectively). Gonorrhea rates were unstable for AIAN females due to a small number of cases and are not presented.

**Gonorrhea Rates by Age Group and Gender, 2021**



**Gonorrhea Rates by Gender and Race/Ethnicity, 2012-2021**



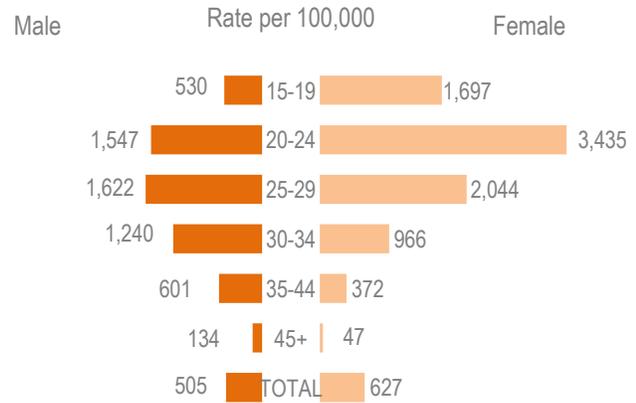
<sup>1</sup>Note that 2012 and 2014-2015 rates for Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander females are unstable due to small numbers.

# CHLAMYDIA

Chlamydia is caused by the bacteria *Chlamydia trachomatis* and is the one of the most commonly reported sexually transmitted infections in Los Angeles County. Chlamydia can be transmitted via vaginal, rectal, or oral sex. Chlamydia can cause epididymitis in men and pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) in women. Severe outcomes may include infertility in women.

In 2021, 53,126 chlamydia cases were reported to LAC, reflecting a case rate of 569 per 100,000. Rates among females were 1.2 times higher than males (627 vs. 505 per 100,000). Transgender individuals represented 0.4% of all chlamydia cases.<sup>3</sup> Chlamydia was most prevalent among 25-29 years old males and females 20-24 years of age (1,622 and 3,435 per 100,000, respectively). Note that health care providers in the State of California are no longer required to report chlamydia cases but the reporting requirement for laboratories continues. Consequently, Chlamydia data in this report reflect data reported by laboratories only and may be underreported. Due to the lack of provider reporting of chlamydia cases, race/ethnicity information are not complete and therefore rates cannot be calculated for racial/ethnic categories.

Chlamydia Rates by Age Group and Gender, 2021



Chlamydia Rates by Gender, 2012-2021

