

# The Infection

# Connection

LAWRENCE-DOUGLAS COUNTY  
**Health Department**  
[www.ldhealth.org](http://www.ldhealth.org)

## Health professionals: Are STDs on your radar?

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As you see your patients for both routine and problem visits, are you considering sexually transmitted diseases among the issues to be addressed?

Sometimes the simple questions of

“Are you sexually active?” “Do you have any concerns about STDs?” or “Do you have sex with men, women or both?” will open the door to reveal risks and concerns you may not have been aware of.

Patients do not find it easy to discuss sexual concerns and providers are also sometimes reluctant to engage in a discussion of sexual

behaviors and risks. But discuss we must!

The few reportable STDs account for more cases than all other reportable diseases combined. In Kansas, the sexually transmitted diseases requiring reports to the Kansas Department

of Health and Environment are: HIV/AIDS, gonorrhea, Chlamydia, syphilis and chancroid.



*Neisseria gonorrhoeae*

These diseases represent a variety of organisms, symptomatic presentations and treatments. That painless sore that went away,

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## Mass dispensing exercise held



**ABOVE:** Jim McDaniel, Clinic Safety Group Supervisor, and Maria Ana Garza, Clinic Division Supervisor, look over plans for the exercise.

**RIGHT:** Douglas County Public Works employees receive their antibiotics.

Health Department staff conducted the agency’s first oral dispensing drill in May at the Douglas County Fairgrounds.

More than 100 people received “antibiotics” for themselves or their families as part of the exercise scenario, which assumed that inhalational anthrax had been intentionally released in Douglas County.

Douglas County Public Works, Fire & Medical, the Sheriff’s Office and the American Red Cross all participated in the “first responder” exercise. Lessons learned will be applied to future exercises and if a real public health emergency were to occur.



## Keep an eye out for rabies

Though Douglas County hasn’t had a positive case of rabies in four years, 110 animals tested positive for the disease in Kansas last year. (A bat was the last animal that tested positive for the rabies virus in Douglas County in 2004).

As humans and animals increase their activity in the summer, the risk of contracting rabies also goes up. This year, several animals, including 37 skunks, have tested positive for rabies in Kansas.

Human rabies can be prevented either by eliminating exposures to rabid animals or by providing exposed persons prompt local treatment of wounds combined with the administration of human rabies immune globulin and vaccine.

Rabies is transmitted only when the virus is introduced into bite wounds, open cuts in skin or onto mucous membranes from saliva or other potentially infectious material such as neural tissue. All mammals are believed to be susceptible to the disease.

If one of your patients reports being bitten by an animal, please call Lawrence Police at 832-7650 if the bite occurred in Lawrence (per city ordinance 3-208) or call the Health Department Environmental Health program at 843-3060 if the bite occurred in the county, so appropriate follow-up can begin.

If a person comes into direct contact (was bitten, scratched or licked) with a wild animal (especially raccoons, skunks, coyotes, foxes or bats), consider providing the person with human rabies immune globulin and vaccine and call the Health Department for consultation. Wild mammalian car-

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## Douglas County Disease Report

Disease category	Disease name	May 2008	June 2008	July 2008	Total
Enteric	Campylobacter	1	0	1	2
	Cryptosporidiosis	0	0	1	1
	Giardiasis	1	1	0	2
	Salmonellosis	0	2	1	3
General	Hepatitis B, acute	0	1	0	0
	Hepatitis B, chronic	2	1	0	3
	Hepatitis C infection (new cases)	7	4	4	15
Vaccine preventable diseases	Mumps	0	1	0	1
	Pertussis	1	0	0	1
	Varicella	3	11	4	18
STDs (tested at LDCHD only)	Gonorrhea	2	5	1	8
	Chlamydia	11	10	11	32

This report includes the number of cases investigated by the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department. Case classifications include: Confirmed, probable, suspect and those determined to not be a case.

### Immunization program update

- The Health Department is no longer providing HPV vaccine, **Gardasil**, to women 19 through 26 years of age. Women in this age group who already began the series through our clinic, however, will have the opportunity to complete the series at the Health Department.

The Health Department will continue to provide HPV vaccine through the Vaccines for Children program to girls 11 through 18 years of age who qualify.

- Back-to-school immunizations** have begun. Please see [www.ldchealth.org](http://www.ldchealth.org) for more information on which vaccines are required for each grade level.

### Rabies cases can increase in summer

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nivores or bats that are not available or suitable for testing should be regarded as rabid animals.

If the bite was from a domestic cat, dog or ferret that is unvaccinated or overdue for vaccine and the animal appears healthy, the animal should be observed daily for 10 days, and then vaccinated.

Any stray or unwanted dog, cat or ferret that bites a person may be euthanized immediately and the head submitted for rabies examination to the K-State lab. Any illness in an isolated or confined animal should be reported immediately to the Health Department.

If signs suggestive of rabies develop, the animal should be euthanized and the head shipped to the K-State rabies lab.

## STDs: Think and evaluate for possible risk

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the odd rash, the bleeding between periods – all of these could be presentations of STDs. The take-home message is to think of STDs and evaluate for possible risk.

In 2006, 1,030,911 cases of Chlamydia were reported to the CDC. As Chlamydia is often asymptomatic, the number of reported cases may represent only the tip of the iceberg of actual disease burden. Overall, 19 million new sexually transmitted infections are reported each year in the U.S.

In 2007 in Douglas County, 383 individuals were reported positive for Chlamydia and 59 individuals were reported positive for gonorrhea.

The age group at greatest risk is 19-24 year-olds with almost half of all STDs occurring in this age group. But don't forget other age patients. What about the newly divorced 54-year-old? Or the 60-something woman whose male partner has male partners? If the questions aren't asked, your patient may not know it's OK to talk about risks and concerns.

Things are changing in the management of screening and treatment of STDs. CDC recommends a broad prevention strategy including:

- Education and counseling to reduce risk by sexual behavior changes (limit partners, consistent use of condoms).
- Identification of infected persons.
- Effective diagnosis and treatment.
- Evaluation, treatment and counseling of sex partners of infected individuals.
- Pre-exposure vaccination of persons at risk for vaccine-preventable diseases (Hepatitis A & B, HPV).

Treatment regimens are also changing. Gonorrhea has developed resistance to the quinolone therapies. It's now recommended to treat Gonorrhea with ceftriaxone 125mg IM or cefixime 400 mg p.o. single dose. Dual treatment with medication appropriate for Chlamydia is recommended if Chlamydia has not been ruled out. Preferred treatment therapies are Azithromycin 1 gm p.o. in a single dose or doxycycline 100 mg. p.o. BID for seven days.

Single-dose therapies are recommended when possible for improved patient adherence to treatment. It is important, however, to counsel clients to abstain from sexual contact for seven days post-treatment and until sexual partners have also been treated.

Resources are available if you have questions about testing or treatment. CDC Sexually Transmitted Disease Treatment Guidelines are available both online at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and in print formats. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment has STD/HIV staff and Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) with a wealth of information. Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department staff are also available to respond to questions. Please call us at 843-0721 or e-mail [nurseinfo@ldchealth.org](mailto:nurseinfo@ldchealth.org).

In its Aug. 3 issue, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported that there are 56,300 new estimated HIV cases per year – approximately 40 percent higher than what had long been assumed when planning and budgeting for efforts to end the epidemic.