

Public Health Points

York City Bureau of Health

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Update on Gonorrhea and New Expedited Partner Treatment Program

Gonorrhea (a.k.a. GC) is a sexually transmitted disease caused by the bacterium known as *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*. GC is the second most commonly reported notifiable disease in the City of York as well as elsewhere in Pennsylvania and the U.S. In 2013 there were 223 cases of GC reported among York City residents.

Untreated GC infections can cause serious and permanent health problems:

- Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)
- Ectopic pregnancy
- Infertility
- Increased risk of HIV transmission (men and women)

A critical factor in the management of GC infection has been this bacteria's ability to develop antibiotic resistance. Antibiotic resistance undermines treatment success, heightens risk of complications, and facilitates transmission by lengthening the time period of infectivity. Over a number of decades *N. gonorrhoeae* has progressively developed resistance to each antibiotic class as they were introduced – from Sulfonamides in the 1930's, to Penicillin in the 1950's to 1980's, and more recently to Tetracyclines and Fluoroquinolones. At this time Cephalosporins are the only currently remaining class of antibiotics recommended for GC treatment. However, there are now worrisome warning signs both internationally and in the U.S. that resistance to Cephalosporins is gradually emerging. In light of threatening emergence of Cephalosporin-resistant GC, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated GC treatment guidelines in 2012 (published in the August 10, 2012, Weekly Morbidity and Mortality Report from CDC).

Patients with GC are not adequately treated until their sexual partners are also treated promptly with effective antibiotic therapy. Partners, however, may be unaware that they are infected because GC infections can frequently be asymptomatic. Partners may not seek treatment because of lack of access to the medical care system and/or because of the high cost of an office or emergency department visit, laboratory testing, and prescribed antibiotics.

In 2013 the York City Bureau of Health responded to these concerns of partners exposed to GC (and other reportable STD's – Chlamydia, Syphilis, and HIV) by starting an Expedited Partner Treatment (EPT) Program. Exposed individuals can come to the Health Bureau's Albert S. Weyer Health Center at 435 W. Philadelphia St. in York and receive appropriate antibiotic treatment in a timely and confidential manner and at no cost. This service is available to both City residents as well as individuals living outside the City.

In 2013, 195 individuals were treated in the City's new EPT Program.

- 62% were males and 38% females.
- 68% were in the age range of 15 to 29 years.
- 57% had no symptoms of STD infection.
- 46% had positive urines tests for Chlamydia (39%), Gonorrhea (5%), or both (2%).
- All but 8 of the 195 patients received antibiotic treatment on site for their exposure history.

For more information about GC and other STD's in York, as well as about the Health Bureau's EPT Program, contact Linda Otero, the Bureau's Disease Intervention Specialist, at 848-3259.

Reportable Conditions 2014 York, PA

Reported Cases	Feb. 2014	Cum.
Animal Bites	2	7
Chlamydia	44	81
Gonorrhea	8	27
Hepatitis B	2	2
Hepatitis C	7	14
HIV Infection	1	2
Influenza Type A	13	41
Influenza Type B	1	2
Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Infection	4	26
Total Case Reports	82	202

World Tuberculosis (TB) Day – March 24, 2014

World TB Day, falling on March 24th each year, is designed to promote public awareness that Tuberculosis (TB) today still remains an epidemic in much of the world, causing the deaths of nearly one and a half million people each year, mostly in developing countries.

March 24th commemorates the day in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch astounded the scientific community by announcing that he had discovered *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the bacterium that causes TB. At the time of Koch's announcement in Germany, the disease was raging throughout Europe and the Americas, causing the death of one out of every seven people. Koch's discovery opened the way towards diagnosing and curing TB.

The global statistics on Tuberculosis today are amazing, if not frightening.

- The vast majority of TB deaths is in the **developing and poorest countries** of the world and affect **mostly young adults in their most productive years**.
- There were **8.6 million new TB cases** in 2012, including approximately 1 million cases among people co-infected with HIV and AIDS.
- An estimated **1.3 million people died from TB** in 2012, equal to nearly 3,600 deaths a day.

Despite these remarkable and depressing statistics, ongoing success against TB is being achieved. New testing methods to detect TB take less time and are more accurate. New cases are occurring less frequently and the number of deaths is also declining. Globally, the percentage of people successfully treated reaches higher and higher levels each year. HIV patients are closely monitored for TB and treated aggressively if TB should develop. Research continues to explore the development of new and more effective drugs, new diagnostic tests and new vaccines.

The World Health Organization, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and public health agencies in countries around the world strive to decrease TB and its resultant tragic burdens. In the U.S. the long term goal is to eliminate TB through efforts of local, state, and national partners and to assist our international partners in bringing TB under control within their borders.

For further information about World TB Day 2014, check out the following websites: www.who.int/tb and www.stoptb.org.

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