



**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**As STD Rates Increase, Health Officials Urge Residents: Get Tested and Protect Yourself
SLO County Resources Are Available to Help Protect Your Health**

San Luis Obispo — Last year, 1249 cases of chlamydia were diagnosed in San Luis Obispo County—up from 440 cases in 2011. The same year, 176 cases of gonorrhea were diagnosed in the county. That's up from 26 cases in 2011, for a disease that now requires treatment with two antibiotics due to drug resistance in the bacteria that causes it.

This spike is not unique to San Luis Obispo County. Sexually transmitted disease (STD) rates are increasing statewide and across the U.S., for reasons that researchers are working to understand. No matter what the reason, local public health officials want residents to understand: the risk is real, and resources are available to help.

"Our message is simple: get tested and protect yourself," said Dr. Penny Borenstein, Health Officer of the County of San Luis Obispo. "If you are sexually active or ever have been, protecting yourself from STDs and getting tested regularly is an important part of caring for your health."

Testing is the only way to know for sure if you have an STD. Many people—both men and women—do not experience symptoms from STDs, or experience only mild symptoms. Even without telltale signs, the diseases can cause permanent damage if they aren't treated. Effective treatment in the form of pills or a shot is available for many common STDs such as chlamydia and gonorrhea. For STDs that cannot be cured, such as HIV and herpes, medicine can help address symptoms and reduce the risk of spreading the disease to others.

The Public Health Department offers confidential, low-cost STD testing, treatment and education:

- **Walk-in:** Drop by with no appointment, Mondays 9:30-11:00 a.m. and Wednesdays 2:30-4:00 p.m. at the Health Agency Campus, 2180 Johnson Avenue in San Luis Obispo.
- **By appointment:** Call 805-781-5500 to schedule an appointment at clinics in Morro Bay, Paso Robles or San Luis Obispo.

In addition to testing and treatment, public health nurses offer guidance on protecting yourself from disease (plus: free condoms) and support in making sure partners are connected with testing and treatment too. If needed, they can contact partners to let them know they may be at risk. In cases when a partner is unable or unlikely to seek medical care, a program called patient-delivered partner treatment may make it possible for a patient to give medicine to a partner to treat the STD. To learn more, make an appointment (805-781-5500) or drop by during the walk-in hours above.

For more about STDs, visit www.cdc.gov/STD. For more on Public Health Department resources and services, visit www.slocounty.ca.gov/STD-Test.

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