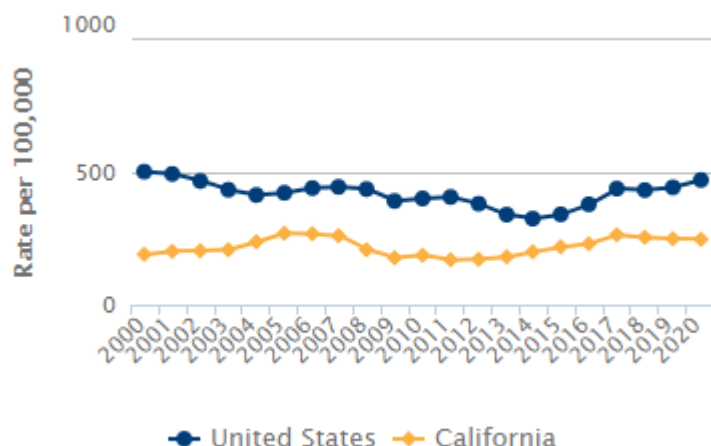


# Teen Sexual Health in California

## Gonorrhea Infections Reported Among Teens Ages 15-19



**Definition:** Number of reported cases of chlamydia and gonorrhea per 100,000 youth ages 10-19, by age group (e.g., among California teens ages 15-19, the rate of chlamydia infections reported in 2020 was 1,087.8 cases per 100,000 teens).

**Data Source:** California Dept. of Public Health, [Sexually Transmitted Diseases Control Branch](#) custom tabulation (Jan. 2023); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance](#) (Apr. 2023); U.S. Census Bureau, [National Population by Characteristics & National Intercensal Tables](#) (Apr. 2023).

## Gonorrhea Infections Reported Among Teens Ages 15-19: 2020

Locations	Rate per 100,000
United States	471.4
California	247.9
Alameda County	295.3
Contra Costa County	298.3
Fresno County	408.3
Kern County	338.7
Los Angeles County	294.2
Orange County	176.7
Riverside County	203.9
Sacramento County	392.8
San Bernardino County	336.3
San Diego County	229.4
Santa Clara County	118.5

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## What It Is

On kidsdata.org, indicators of teen sexual health include the number and rate of reported cases of chlamydia and gonorrhea among young people ages 10-19, at the county level overall, by age group, and by gender. Also available are state-level estimates of the percentage of teens ages 14-17 who have not had sex.

## Why This Topic Is Important

Sexual health is a critical component of overall teen health and is influenced by complex factors including biology, socioeconomic, community environments, relationships with family and peers, media, and access to health care and education. While sexuality is a normal part of adolescent development, sexual activity can have serious consequences, including sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancy. It is estimated that although young people ages 15-24 make up 13% of the U.S. population, they represent around 25% of the sexually active population and account for around 50% of all new STI cases each year.

Among infectious diseases that must be reported to the U.S. government, chlamydia and gonorrhea are the most common, with young people ages 15-24 having the highest rates of infection when compared with other age groups. Nationwide, African American/black youth experience especially high rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea; in 2021, black youth ages 15-19 were diagnosed with chlamydia at more than five times the rate for white youth of the same age, and with gonorrhea at nearly 12 times the rate of their white peers.

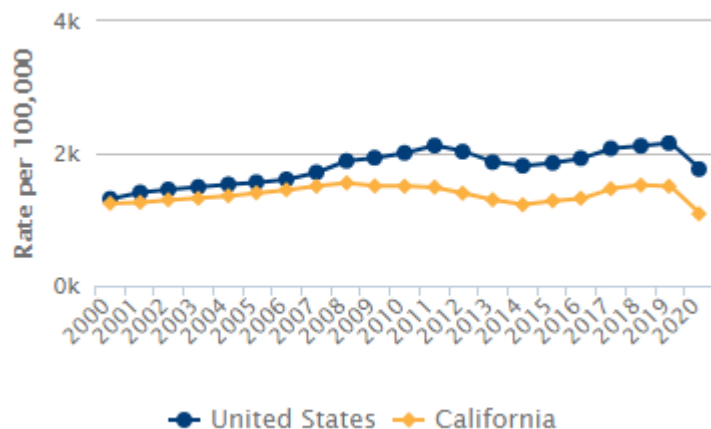
Chlamydia and gonorrhea infections are often asymptomatic, particularly in women, so regular screenings are critical in order to provide timely treatment and to reduce disease transmission. If untreated, chlamydia and gonorrhea can lead to chronic pain, pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, and adverse reproductive outcomes.

## How Children Are Faring

According to survey data for 2017-2018, an estimated 87% of California teens ages 14-17 had never had sex. Young people who engage in sexual activity may be at risk for sexually transmitted infections such as chlamydia and gonorrhea; in 2018, more than 48,000 new chlamydia and gonorrhea infections were reported among teens ages 15-19 statewide.

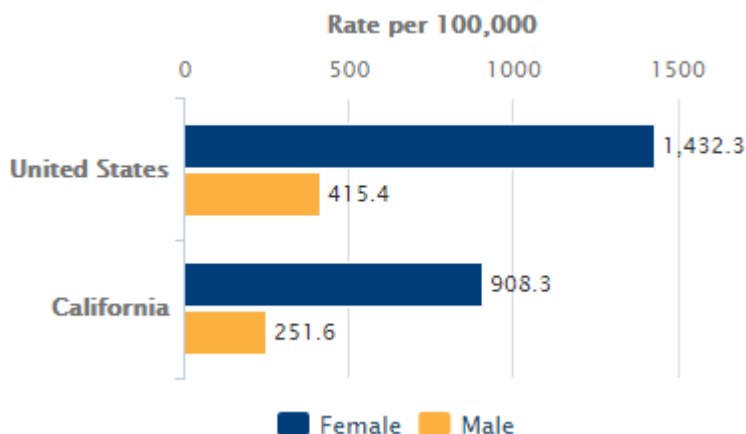
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## Chlamydia Infections Reported Among Youth Ages 10-19, by Gender: 2020



**Definition:** Number of reported cases of chlamydia and gonorrhea per 100,000 youth ages 10-19, by gender (e.g., among female youth ages 10-19 in California, the rate of chlamydia infections reported in 2020 was 908.3 cases per 100,000 youth).  
**Data Source:** California Dept. of Public Health, [Sexually Transmitted Diseases Control Branch](#) custom tabulation (Jan. 2023); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance](#) (Apr. 2023); U.S. Census Bureau, [National Population by Characteristics](#) & [National Intercensal Tables](#) (Apr. 2023).

COVID-19 pandemic likely altered youth sexual behaviors and access to sexual health services, introducing uncertainty in the interpretation of case data. Compared with 2019, reported cases of chlamydia among California youth ages 10-19 fell sharply in 2020, from 788 infections per 100,000 youth to 573 per 100,000, echoing national trends. While rates fell in all but one county with data over this period, county-level variation remained wide, ranging from fewer than 250 to more than 800 cases per 100,000 in 2020. As in previous years, rates of chlamydia infection were more than three times higher for female youth ages 10-19 than for their male counterparts in 2019 and 2020, statewide and nationally.

Reported cases of youth gonorrhea were comparatively stable between 2019 and 2020. At the national level, the rate rose from 229 to 245 infections per 100,000 young people ages 10-19—an increase of around 10,000 cases. In California, the change was smaller and differed by gender. Overall, rates fell by less than one case per 100,000 youth, driven by a drop from 165 to 162 cases per 100,000 females, offsetting an opposing increase from 99 to 101 cases per 100,000 males.

*View references for this text and additional research on this topic:*

<https://kidsdata.org/topic/86/teen-sexual-health/summary>



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