SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

In general, adolescents and young adults are at much higher risk than older adults of contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs), such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, and genital human papillomavirus (HPV). Although young people aged 15–24 years represent only one-quarter of the sexually experienced population, they acquire nearly half of all new STIs.\(^1\)

Chlamydia continues to be the most common reportable STI among adolescents and young adults. There were 2,000 chlamydial infections per 100,000 adolescents aged 15-19 years and 2,165 per 100,000 young adults aged 20-24 years in 2009. Gonorrhea was less common, with rates of 405 and 479 per 100,000 in these age groups, respectively. Rates vary by race/ethnicity: among adolescents aged 15-19 years, the highest rates of chlamydia were reported among non-Hispanic Blacks (6,765 per 100,000), followed by American Indian/Alaska Natives (2,718 per 100,000). Rates of gonorrhea were also highest among these two groups.

Unlike chlamydia and gonorrhea, HPV is not required to be reported to the CDC. However, a recent study indicated that approximately one-quarter of females aged 14–19 years and nearly 45 percent of those aged 20–24 years are infected with HPV.\(^2\) A vaccine for certain types of HPV was approved in 2006 for use in females aged 9–26 years.\(^3\) In 2009, 44.3 percent of females aged 13–17 years had received at least one dose of the three-dose series.\(^4\)