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# El Paso Sees Significant Rise in Sexually Transmitted Diseases

**EL PASO, Texas** – The Department of Public Health (DPH) continues to urge residents to practice safer sex methods and test for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) as the number of cases continues to rise.

According to state numbers, from 2010 to 2018, there has been a significant increase in chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis.

El Paso had more than a 30% increase in chlamydia cases between 2010 and 2018, with 4,351 cases reported in 2010 and 5,699 in 2018. Statewide, there was a 26% increase.

Gonorrhea cases increased locally from 828 in 2010 to 1,137 in 2018. Syphilis has a disturbing trend with 33 cases recorded in El Paso in 2010, compared to 185 cases recorded in 2018, a 460% increase for the city compared to an increase of 120% for the state.

“These diseases were huge in the 1920s and ‘30s and spiked during World War II. Now, one hundred years later, these diseases are making a comeback and it is important that our residents be aware of the signs and symptoms and practice prevention methods,” said Robert Resendes, Public Health Director.

Syphilis is often referred to as “the Great Pretender” because the symptoms of this bacterial disease are so similar to other diseases. In addition, there are several stages of the disease, each with its own signs and symptoms. One of the most serious complications, if left untreated, is an infection of the nervous system that can lead to meningitis, nerve problems, and even blindness.

Syphilis can also be transmitted from a pregnant woman to her unborn baby. Increased testing for pregnant women has become standard as cases of untreated syphilis in pregnant women can lead to having a stillbirth or infant death in up to 40% of cases. Babies born infected with the disease can also suffer serious complications including bone deformities, severe anemia, and brain and nerve problems, such as convulsions, blindness or deafness.

The DPH CommUnity Care Center continues to provide both testing and treatment for these diseases with a sliding fee scale based on a patient’s income. Appointments can be made by calling (915) 212-0200. More information is available at [www.EPHealth.com](http://www.EPHealth.com).

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