

November 21, 2011

News Release

For Immediate Release

Gonorrheal Infections Rise

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department has seen a recent increase in gonorrheal infections. The Health Department's STD Clinic typically diagnoses an average of four cases per month. From Oct. 3 through Nov. 8, 2011 the clinic diagnosed 19 cases.

Like most sexually transmitted diseases, gonorrhea can be prevented by:

- Abstaining from sexual intercourse
- Using condoms consistently and correctly
- Being in a monogamous relationship with a partner who has been tested

Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted disease caused by the bacterium, *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*. It is a very common disease – the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates approximately 700,000 new infections each year. The highest rates are among teenagers, young adults, and African Americans.

Symptoms include burning during urination and discharge, and may appear 1 to 14 days after exposure. This means infected people may not be aware they have gonorrhea even while spreading the disease through unsafe sex. It is also possible to be infected without developing any symptoms.

Gonorrhea can be treated with an antibiotic. Untreated gonorrheal infections in women can lead to Pelvic Inflammatory Disease and infertility.

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department operates an STD Clinic that offers free testing and treatment. Testing is provided at the Harold K. Bengsch Building, 227 E. Chestnut Expressway. Testing is offered during walk-in clinics open to the public on a first come, first served basis on Monday, Wednesday and Friday each week. Doors open at 7:30 a.m. and registration begins at 8 a.m. Express testing (urine test for gonorrhea and chlamydia) may be used for clients who do not have symptoms of a sexually transmitted disease.

More information about testing guidelines and STDs in general can be found on the Health Department's website at: www.springfieldmo.gov/health/std.html

Media only:

For more information or interview requests, contact: Mike Brothers, Public Information Administrator, (417) 874-1205.