



NEWS RELEASE Mobile County Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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April is National STD Awareness Month

April is National STD Awareness Month. And with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) at epidemic levels, and public awareness and knowledge of them being critically low, the Mobile County Health Department is encouraging everyone to learn about the diseases.

Here are the latest STD estimates from the American Social Health Association:

- One in two Americans will contract an STD at some point in their lifetimes.
- An estimated 65 million Americans are living with a viral STD.
- STDs are spreading at a rate of 15 million new cases each year.
- One in two sexually active persons will contract an STD by age 25.
- One in four teens contracts an STD each year.
- Less than half of adults ages 18 to 44 have ever been tested for an STD other than HIV.
- Over 6 million Americans acquire the virus that causes genital warts each year.
- An estimated one in four Americans has genital herpes, and, about 1.6 million new infections occur each year.

“With these facts in mind, we are strongly encouraging anyone who is sexually active to discuss being tested for HIV and other STDs with their health care provider, even if they have no symptoms,” says Dr. Bert Eichold, Health Officer.

The STD Clinic at the Mobile County Health Department offers confidential testing and medications at no charge from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, at its downtown site at 251 N. Bayou Street. There is a \$1 registration fee and you must have a picture ID. For more information, call the STD Clinic at 690-8153 or go to www.MobileCountyHealth.org.

While STDs are common across all groups, young people are hit especially hard. A recent study presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that approximately half of all new STDs occur in youth ages 15-24 and 1 in 4 girls and young women ages 14-19 have at least one of the more common STDs.

According to Dr. Eichold, the most commonly reported bacterial STD is chlamydia. It often does not cause symptoms in women and sometimes not in men. When undetected in women, the infection can spread to the uterus or fallopian tubes and cause pelvic inflammatory disease. If untreated, it can lead to chronic pelvic pain and infertility.

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend routine chlamydia testing for women under age 26, and for women who are pregnant or have new or multiple partners. CDC also recommends routine HIV testing for those ages 13-64. While not a test for STDs, women should also have regular Pap tests.

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