



# Panhandle Health District

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**Panhandle Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Gonorrhea Cases at All Time High in North Idaho**

**HAYDEN, ID** – Gonorrhea is on the rise in Idaho’s five northern counties and Panhandle Health District (PHD) is reminding residents about the importance of getting tested. 32 cases of gonorrhea have been reported so far this year, compared to 17 cases during January-May of 2014. Gonorrhea, which can be successfully treated if caught early, is one of the most common sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in the U.S., with more than 800,000 infections estimated to occur each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

“Looking at the previous five years, the average was 9 gonorrhea cases in North Idaho during the first half of the year. 32 cases reported thus far in 2015 is a significant increase,” said Dave Hylsky, PHD’s Staff Epidemiologist. “This uptick is concerning because we are seeing a wide range of people being infected – both men and women, ages 15 to 46 years-old. There’s no distinct pattern, location or demographic.”

Gonorrhea is sexually transmitted, but can also be spread from an infected pregnant woman to her child during delivery. Some people infected with gonorrhea do not experience any symptoms. If they do, symptoms are often mild and can include a burning sensation while urinating or discharge. Untreated, gonorrhea can cause serious and permanent health problems.

To reduce the risk of contracting any STD, Hylsky recommends that people get tested regularly, know their partner’s STD status, always use condoms with new partners, and minimize anonymous sexual relations and sex with multiple partners. “There is no preventative medication or vaccine to ensure gonorrhea-free health. Practicing safe sex by using a condom or monogamy with an uninfected partner is the best way to prevent the spread,” Hylsky continued.

Despite the recent increase in gonorrhea cases, chlamydia is still the most common sexually transmitted disease in Idaho’s five northern counties. Panhandle Health District provides confidential STD testing and treatment at a sliding fee scale. For more information or to make an appointment, visit [www.panhandlehealthdistrict.org](http://www.panhandlehealthdistrict.org).

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