

# Chlamydia

## Why is chlamydia important?

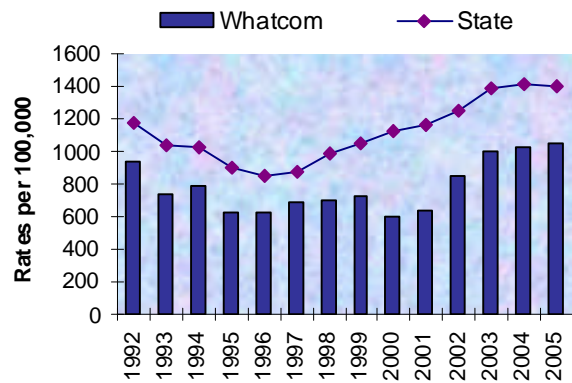
Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted disease that can be cured with antibiotics. Approximately 70 percent of women with chlamydia have few or no symptoms. If untreated, chlamydia is a major cause of pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) in women, which may lead to ectopic pregnancy, chronic pelvic pain and infertility. Men are more likely than women to have symptoms. Left untreated, chlamydia may also cause sterility in men.

## How are we doing?

The chart and table in the right column provide a comparison of reported chlamydia rates in Washington and Whatcom County for ages 15-24 from 1991 through 2005. Whatcom County has consistently had a lower rate of chlamydia than the state. Although state and county rates have both risen since 2001, the chlamydia rate for Whatcom County was still lower than the state rate in 2005: 1,053 per 100,000 compared to 1,402.

In 1988, chlamydia screening and treatment activities were initiated in Washington through a federally-funded *Infertility Prevention Project*. Women under age 24 who meet certain criteria are eligible for screening and treatment if they are found to be infected. Men who are partners of a person diagnosed with chlamydia are also eligible for screening and treatment. In Whatcom County, the Health Department, Juvenile Detention, and Mt. Baker Planned Parenthood are participating in this project, as long as funding is available.

**Chlamydia Rates (Ages 15-24)  
per 100,000 Population**



**Chlamydia Rates & Cases (Ages 15-24)  
Per 100,000 Population**

Year	Whatcom County		Washington State	
	Rates per 100,000 Population (Ages 15-24)	# of Cases	Rates per 100,000 Population (Ages 15-24)	# of Cases
1992	937	218	1,172	8,198
1993	732	176	1,043	7,440
1994	784	194	1,023	7,354
1995	619	157	896	6,535
1996	621	162	855	6,321
1997	683	186	875	6,626
1998	703	199	989	7,713
1999	731	217	1,050	8,427
2000	596	183	1,130	9,248
2001	632	201	1,162	9,748
2002	849	275	1,247	10,652
2003	1,003	331	1,390	12,065
2004	1,024	345	1,412	12,464
2005	1,053	363	1,402	12,603

## **What remains to be done?**



While the *Infertility Prevention Project* provides important services to some county residents, routine testing is needed for all individuals at risk—whether they are symptomatic or not—so that chlamydia cases do not go undetected. Recommended screening protocols and testing procedures should be implemented in all healthcare settings, especially community clinics, hospital emergency departments, urgent care clinics and by healthcare providers who see teens and young adults.