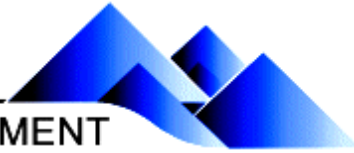




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TRICOUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT



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**News
Release**

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**Spread of Chlamydia in Tri-County Area Alarms Public
Health Officials**

Free testing and new campaign offered to reduce growing STD problem

(Salt Lake City) – TriCounty Health Department, which includes Uintah, Duchesne, and Daggett counties, saw an alarming increase in cases of a common sexually transmitted disease (STD) during the first half of this year. Health officials are concerned about a 25 percent increase in cases of chlamydia reported between January and July 2010. The three-county area saw 28 cases of chlamydia during the first six months of 2009, while preliminary data shows 38 cases were reported during the first half of 2010.

“Most of the time, people who have chlamydia won’t be aware of the problem,” says Joseph Shaffer, director of health, TriCounty Health Department. “Testing is easy, painless and completely confidential.”

“I was tested for chlamydia and gonorrhea,” says one TriCounty resident who prefers not to give her name. “The test for both diseases is done at the same time with a simple urine test; no embarrassing exam is required. I got my results by phone within two weeks. Other than the nurse who administered the test, no one even knew that I had been tested.”

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The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) and TriCounty Health Department will offer free, confidential chlamydia/gonorrhea and HIV testing in Vernal and Roosevelt on August 20 and 21:

August 20, 2010, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
TriCounty Health Department Roosevelt Clinic
281 East 200 North, Roosevelt, UT 84078

August 21, 2010, 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm
TriCounty Health Department Vernal Clinic
133 South 500 East, Vernal, UT 84078

Testing is available on a walk-in basis or appointments can be made at www.tricountyhealth.com. Chlamydia and gonorrhea are cured with a one-time dose of antibiotics, which will be given to patients and their partners at no charge at the time of diagnosis. In Utah, during 2009, 66% of chlamydia cases were diagnosed in 15-24 year olds, however anyone who is sexually active is at risk.

The two agencies are also partnering an ad campaign, Catch The Answers (www.CatchTheAnswers.com), which will be running on billboards and popular radio stations to raise awareness of the growing STD problem in the tightly-knit communities. The small towns haven't seen billboards quite like this before. One asks, "What does a chlamydia look like?" Another reads "Can I kiss someone with chlamydia?" A final billboard asks the question on every parent's lips, "What if my kids have a question I can't answer?"

Chlamydia and gonorrhea often go undetected because many people do not experience symptoms. These "silent" infections can result in pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancy, and even infertility. Any sexually active person can be infected.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health and Utah's local health departments is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.