# *Gonorrhea* Cases in Clark County

## *General Gonorrhea Information*

**Background**

Gonorrhea is one of the most common sexually transmitted diseases, within the United States, caused by a bacterium. Gonorrhea can grow easily in the warm, moist areas of the reproductive tract, including the cervix (opening to the womb), uterus (womb), and fallopian tubes (egg canals). Annually the CDC estimates 820,000 people get new infections and less than half of these infections are detected and reported.

Cases are partly dependent on age: 83% of reported cases occur in persons 15-29 years of age, with 38% of cases 20-24 years of age.

**Transmission & Risk**

Gonorrhea is transmitted by an individual who has sex with someone who has the disease. Sex means anal, vaginal, or oral sex. This STD can also be spread from an untreated mother to her baby during childbirth. Any sexually active person is at risk of gonorrhea, those at higher risk are teenagers, young adults, and African Americans.

**Symptoms & Complications**

*Men*: They may be asymptomatic; however, common symptoms can include a burning sensation when urinating, or a white, yellow, or green discharge from the penis that usually appears 1-14 days after infection. Occasionally there can be painful or swollen testicles.

*Women*: Most do not have symptoms, and when symptoms are present, they are often mild and can be mistaken for a bladder or vaginal infection. Initial symptoms can include painful or burning sensation when urinating, increased vaginal discharge, or vaginal bleeding between periods. Women with gonorrhea are at risk of developing serious complications, whether symptoms are absent or mild.

*All*: Symptoms of rectal infection in people may include discharge, anal itching, soreness, bleeding, or painful bowel movements. Rectus infections can not have symptoms. Infections can also be present in the throat, but usually there are no symptoms.

When left untreated, gonorrhea can cause serious and permanent health problems in both women and men. In women, gonorrhea can spread and cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). PID symptoms can range from mild to severe and can include abdominal pain and fever. In men, gonorrhea can cause a painful condition called epididymitis in the tubes attached to the testicles. Gonorrhea can also spread to the blood or joints if left untreated, this can be life threatening.

**Testing, Diagnosis, Treatment**

Any sexually active person should be tested for gonorrhea. Anyone with genital symptoms should stop having sex and see a health care provider immediately. If you have gonorrhea, it is recommended to be tested for other STDs and HIV.

A urine test is the most common used to test for gonorrhea; however, swabs can be used to collect samples from the throat, rectum, man's urethra, or a woman's cervix.

With the right treatment, gonorrhea is curable. It is important to take all medication as prescribed; however, medication will not repair any permanent damage done by the disease. There has been an emergence of drug-resistant strains of gonorrhea and treatment is becoming more difficult. If symptoms do not improve after a few days, a reevaluation from a health care provider is recommended.

More information can be found here: [https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/infectious-disease-control-manual/section3/section-3-gonorrhea](https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/infectious-disease-control-manual/section3/section-3-gonorrhea)

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*Clark County Related Discussion*

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Figure 1 shows the gonorrhea cases in Clark County from 2017 to 2021. All cases during this period are classified as confirmed. The cases include gonococcal infection, cervicitis, neonatal conjunctivitis, and pelvic inflammatory disease. From 2017 to 2020 there is a 37.8% increase in cases, while the overall 5-year period (2017-2021) shows a 9.0% increase.

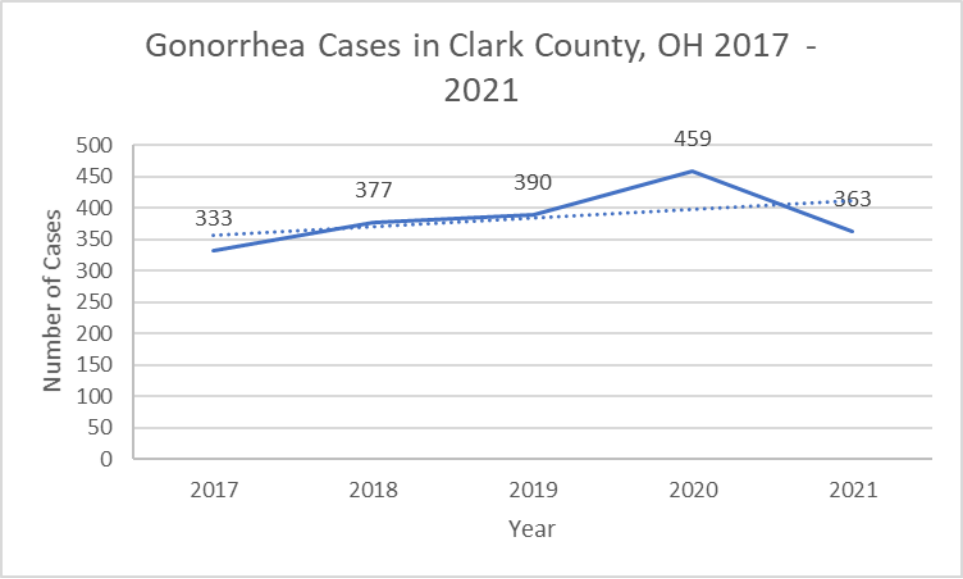


***Figure 1*** *Gonorrhea Cases 2017-2021*

Table 1 shows the breakdown of gender per year, including the percent difference between female and male. A positive percent means there are more female cases than male, while a negative percent means there are more male cases than female. 2017 was the only year that there were more male cases than female. Between 2018 and 2021, females make up more cases than males with percent differences ranging from 14.8-35.9%.

| | Female | Male | % Difference[1] |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2017 | 159 | 174 | -9.0% |
| 2018 | 219 | 158 | 32.4% |
| 2019 | 230 | 160 | 35.9% |
| 2020 | 260 | 199 | 26.6% |
| 2021 | 196 | 169 | 14.8% |

***Table 1*** *Annual gonorrhea cases by sex*

Figure 2 shows the breakdown of cases by gender and race per year. Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Other are not shown on the chart due to small counts. Those who identify as Black or African American comprise 27.7% of cases; however, they make up 9.0% of the Clark County population[2]. There is a 207.8% change between Black individuals having gonorrhea and Black residents of Clark County. Those who identify as white or Asian make up 37.4% and 0.1% of cases, respectively, while comprising 86.9% and 0.7% of the Clark County population. The full racial breakdown can be seen in Table 2.

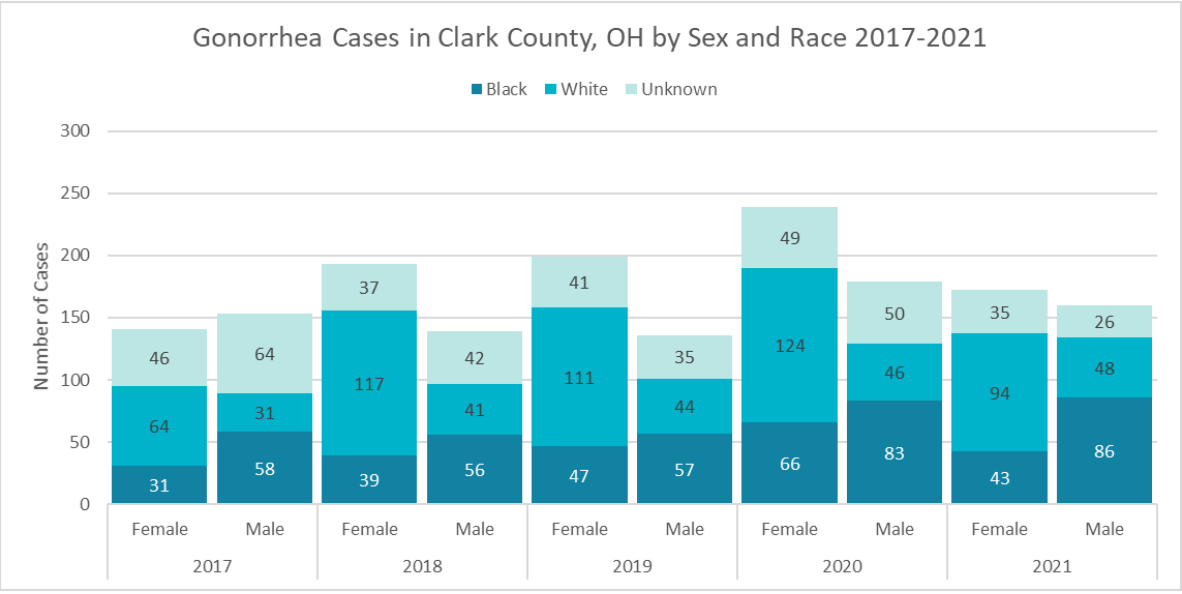


***Figure 2*** *Gonorrhea cases by sex and race*

[1] Calculated by: $\frac{a-b}{\frac{a+b}{2}} * 100$; a = female, b = male

[2] Population percentages were gathered from here: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/clarkcountyohio

| | % Cases | % Population | % Change[3] |
|---|---|---|---|
| White | 37.4 | 86.9 | -56.9% |
| Black or African American | 27.7 | 9.0 | 207.8% |
| Asian | 0.1 | 0.7 | -92.6% |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.0% |
| Multi-Race | 4.3 | 3.0 | 43.8% |
| Other | 2.8 | NA | NA |
| Unknown | 22.1 | NA | NA |

***Table 2*** *Total gonorrhea cases by race*

Within Clark County, the highest concentration of cases is within the 0-19 (23.7%) and 20-29 (46.2%) age groups. Those two age groups have females make up the majority of cases, while 30-79 have males predominantly make up cases. Table 3 shows the full breakdown.

| Age Group | Female | Male | Total | % Of Cases | % Difference[2] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0-19 | 317 | 139 | 456 | 23.7% | 78.1% |
| 20-29 | 520 | 368 | 888 | 46.2% | 34.2% |
| 30-39 | 179 | 240 | 419 | 21.8% | -29.1% |
| 40-49 | 41 | 67 | 108 | 5.6% | -48.1% |
| 50-59 | 6 | 25 | 31 | 1.6% | -122.6% |
| 60-69 | 1 | 15 | 16 | 0.8% | -175.0% |
| 70-79 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 0.3% | -200.0% |

***Table 3*** *Total gonorrhea cases by age group*

[2] Calculated by: $\frac{a-b}{\frac{a+b}{2}} * 100$; a = female, b = male

[3] Calculated by: $\frac{a-b}{b} * 100$; a = % cases, b = % population