

## **Gonorrhea**

**Agent:** *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* (bacteria)

**Mode of Transmission:** Sexually transmitted through direct contact with infected areas.

**Signs/Symptoms:**

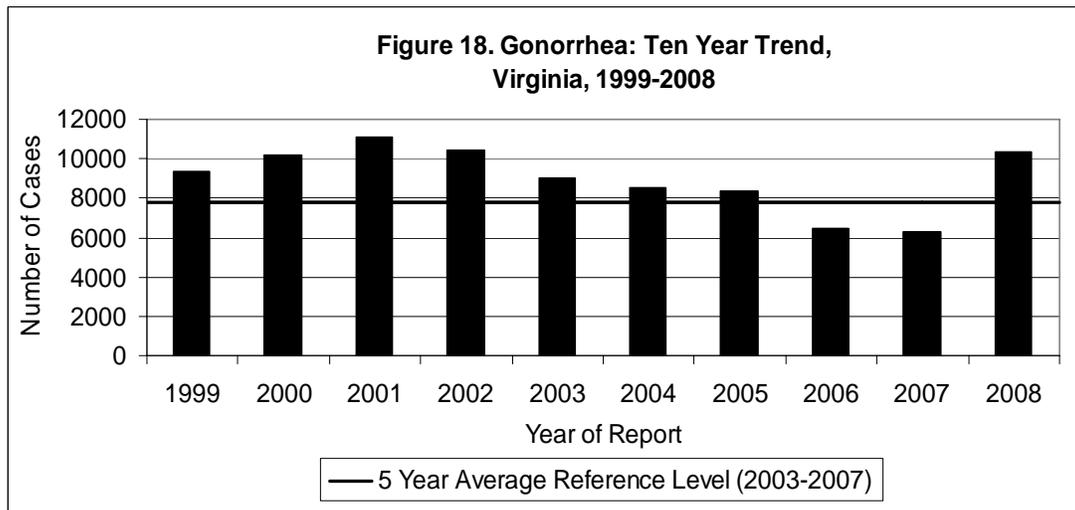
**Men:** Discharge from the urethra.

**Women:** Usually asymptomatic, although it may cause vaginal discharge or bleeding after intercourse.

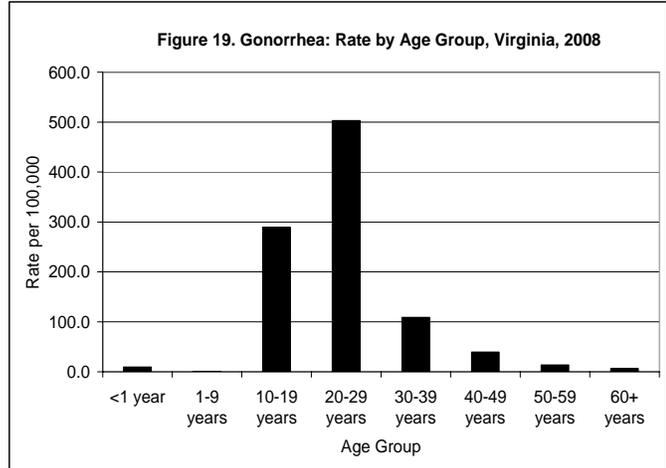
**Prevention:** Safer sexual practices and ensuring that infected sexual contacts are treated.

**Other Important Information:** In 2004, the CDC stopped recommending fluoroquinolones as a first-line treatment of gonorrhea in men who have sex with men (MSM) because of an increase in fluoroquinolone resistance. Since April 2007, the CDC has advised providers not to use fluoroquinolones (e.g., ciprofloxacin, ofloxacin, and levofloxacin) for the treatment of gonorrhea. In April 2008, cefixime became available again for distribution in the United States. A single 400 mg dose of cefixime is the only oral treatment for uncomplicated gonorrhea of the cervix, urethra or rectum recommended by the CDC.

According to the CDC, gonorrhea is substantially under-diagnosed and underreported, and approximately twice as many new infections are estimated to occur as are reported each year. Gonorrhea rates in Virginia declined from 2001 to 2007. The 10,336 reported cases in 2008 were a 65% increase from the reported cases in 2007, and a 33% increase from the five year average of 7,742.8 cases per year (Figure 18). This increase is partly attributed to changes in data handling and data entry protocols which allowed for greater efficiency of data collection.



A comparison of age groups indicates that gonorrhea incidence is highest in the 20-29 year age group (503.2 per 100,000 population), followed by the 10-19 year age group (289.4 per 100,000 population) (Figure 19). The rate in the black population (483.5 per 100,000) was 23 times the rate in the white population (20.8 per 100,000), which is a decrease from 33 times the rate in the white population in 1998. However, gonorrhea remains the sexually transmitted disease with the most significant racial disparity in Virginia.



Gonorrhea incidence rates were higher among females compared to males (148.9 and 118.3 per 100,000, respectively). The eastern region had the highest incidence rate (285.8 per 100,000), followed by the central region (217.1 per 100,000). Among the other regions in the state, incidence ranged from 34.8 to 76.1 per 100,000. No seasonal trend was observed.