

## **Syphilis in San Diego**

San Diego, like many urban areas across the nation, is experiencing an increase in syphilis cases. During 2006, infectious syphilis increased 22% and continues to rise in 2007. The majority of cases are in men who have sex with men, but more than 15% of the cases are not. Cases have been reported in college students; however we are not aware of any cases in USD students.

Syphilis is passed from person to person through direct contact with a syphilis sore. These lesions occur mainly on the external genitals, vagina, anus, or in the rectum. Sores also can occur on the lips and in the mouth. Because syphilis lesions are typically painless and can occur in places that are not visible, many people are not aware that they have one. In addition, using condoms does not always protect against transmission of syphilis as sores may be in areas not covered by the condom. Transmission of the organism occurs during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Pregnant women with the disease can pass it to the babies they are carrying. Syphilis cannot be spread through contact with toilet seats, doorknobs, swimming pools, hot tubs, bathtubs, shared clothing, or eating utensils.

Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/std/syphilis/STDFact-Syphilis.htm> for more information. A blood test for syphilis is available at the Student Health Center located at the back of Camino Hall. No appointment is necessary and the cost of the test is \$8.