

Syphilis

Fact Sheet



What is syphilis?

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) that can infect men, women, and babies.

Symptoms

Syphilis is divided into stages (primary, secondary, latent, and tertiary). Each stage has different symptoms. Treatment will prevent progressing to additional stages.

- **Primary: A sore or multiple sores are found at original site of infection. They are most commonly firm, round, and painless**
- **Secondary: Skin rash, swollen lymph nodes, & fever may occur. Symptoms may also be mild and go unnoticed.**
- **Latent: No signs or symptoms**
- **Tertiary: Severe medical problems can occur affecting the heart, brain, and other organs.**

Testing is completed by a blood test.

Prevention

STIs can affect people of any age. **Lower your risk by using barriers every time you have sex** -such as condoms and dental dams. **Know the status of your partner prior to sex.** Having multiple sex partners increases risk. **Pregnant women should receive regular prenatal care with testing during the first trimester, third trimester, and at delivery.**

Reinfection is possible even with previous treatment for syphilis.

How is it spread?

Syphilis is transmitted by direct contact with a syphilis sore during vaginal, anal, or oral sex with an infected partner. Syphilis can also be passed from mom to baby during pregnancy or delivery.

Treatment

Syphilis infections are treatable and curable.

Antibiotics and dosage is based on the stage of infection. Left untreated, permanent damage and complications can occur.

Untreated syphilis in pregnancy can lead to stillbirth, prematurity, and life-long complications for the infant.

Abstain from sexual activity until treatment is completed.

Sexual partners should also be tested and treated.

