

Syphilis

1. What is syphilis?

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by bacteria (germs). Syphilis is easy to cure. Without treatment, it can hurt your body's organs. Congenital syphilis is when a pregnant woman passes syphilis to her baby during pregnancy or childbirth. It can cause a woman to have a baby too early or cause a miscarriage or stillbirth (a baby born dead). It can also lead to serious health problems in babies.

2. How is this disease spread?

You can get syphilis by having contact with a syphilis sore during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Sores can be found on the penis, vagina, anus, or on the lips and mouth. You may not see the sores and they don't cause pain. Congenital syphilis spreads from mother to baby during pregnancy or birth.

3. What are the symptoms of this disease?

Often people don't notice symptoms, so they don't know they're infected. Signs of syphilis may include a sore near the area where the germ entered the body (vagina, anus, lips, or mouth) or rash on one or more areas of the body. The symptoms may appear and disappear. The only way to know for sure is to get tested.

4. When should I get tested?

Test if you are experiencing symptoms. Test if you are getting tested for other STDs. If you are having sex without using a condom and/or have multiple sex partners, get tested every 6 months. If you are a man having sex with other men, get tested every 3-6 months. Test if you are a woman and plan to get pregnant. If you're pregnant, remind your doctor to test you three times: during your first trimester (1 – 12 weeks), third trimester (28 – 32 weeks), and at delivery.

5. How is this disease treated?

Syphilis can be treated and cured with antibiotics (medicine that kills germs). Make sure your sex partner(s) get tested and treated too. This will help them stay healthy, avoid infecting others, and avoid re-infecting you.

6. How can I prevent this disease?

- Use condoms.
- Go to your doctor for testing and treatment as early as possible. If you don't have a regular doctor, call the free STD hotline **(800) 758-0880** to find out where to get tested and treated for free.



Key Points:

- Syphilis and other STDs are on the rise in LA County.
- Common symptoms of syphilis include a sore or rash, but many people don't see signs.
- Get tested for syphilis.
- Syphilis is treated and cured with antibiotics.

For more information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<http://www.cdc.gov/std/syphilis/stdfact-syphilis.htm>

U.S. Office of Women's Health

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/syphilis.html>

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