
Syphilis can be cured!

Syphilis can be cured with medicine given by a health care provider. Since you can have syphilis and another STD at the same time, you may have to take more than one medicine at a time.

If you have syphilis or any other STD:

- ◆ Take **all** the medicine given to you
- ◆ Follow your health care provider's directions
- ◆ Call your health care provider as soon as possible if the medicine gives you problems
- ◆ **Tell your sex partner(s) to get tested**, or ask your health care provider to tell them
- ◆ **Don't have sex until a health care provider says you and your partner(s) are cured**
- ◆ Don't try to treat yourself
- ◆ Don't share your medicine

Get tested for syphilis if:

- ◆ You or your sex partner(s) have symptoms of syphilis
- ◆ You have had more than one sex partner, male or female (the more partners you have, the greater your risk)
- ◆ You have had sex without a condom
- ◆ You have another STD
- ◆ Your partner tells you that they are being tested or treated for an STD

How can you stay healthy?

- ◆ The only sure way to avoid syphilis and other STDs is to **not have sex**. Vaginal, oral, and anal sex can all pass the disease from one person to another.
- ◆ If you do have sex, **use a latex condom every time**. When used the right way, condoms can help keep you from getting syphilis. Be sure to put the condom on before the penis touches the vagina, mouth, or anus. However, condoms may not provide protection if infected areas are not covered by the condom.
- ◆ If you have sex, **stay with one partner who only has sex with you**. Use condoms unless tests show that your partner does not have syphilis or other STDs.



To learn more about syphilis and other STDs, or to find out where to get tested in your area, call:

Texas HIV/STD InfoLine

1 (800) 299-2437 (English/Español)

1 (800) 252-8012 (TDD/TTY)

Web site: www.tdh.state.tx.us/hivstd

or

Call your doctor or local health department



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What you should
know about
Syphilis



= Texas Department of Health =

SYPHILIS: A serious disease. A simple cure.

What is Syphilis?

Syphilis is a very serious sexually transmitted disease (STD).

Syphilis is caused by a germ you can get from any sexual contact with the penis, vagina, mouth, or anus of a person who has the disease.

A pregnant woman can also pass syphilis to her unborn child.

Many people do not know they have Syphilis.

Many people with syphilis look and feel perfectly healthy.

But even if you don't have symptoms, you can still pass syphilis to other people.

Too many people who have syphilis do not realize they have the disease until they have severe health problems.

Syphilis can be deadly!

Syphilis can be very harmful for both women and men if it isn't treated early.

What are the symptoms of Syphilis?

Syphilis usually begins as a sore, called a chancre ("shank-er"), where the germ has entered the body. This sore is usually on or near the genitals, but it can also occur around the mouth or anus.

This sore does not hurt and it goes away without treatment within a few weeks, **but the germ is still there and you still have syphilis.**

Later, there may be other symptoms, such as:

- ◆ Rashes, especially on the palms of the hands and bottoms of the feet
- ◆ Hair loss
- ◆ Headaches, fever and sore throat
- ◆ Aches in the bones
- ◆ Swollen joints

These symptoms will also go away without treatment, **but the germ is still there and you still have syphilis.**

If left untreated over a period of years, syphilis can cause:

- ◆ Arthritis
- ◆ Blindness
- ◆ Heart disease
- ◆ Mental illness
- ◆ Death

How do you know if you have Syphilis?

The only way to be sure is to get tested at your doctor's office or an STD clinic. A simple blood test can tell if you have the disease.

What about Syphilis and pregnancy?

All pregnant women should be tested for Syphilis at their first prenatal visit and at delivery. A pregnant woman with untreated syphilis may have a stillbirth (baby born dead) or a baby born with serious physical and mental health problems.

What about Syphilis and HIV?

A person with syphilis is at high risk for infection with HIV. The syphilis sore can provide an entry point for HIV and other STDs. When you get tested for syphilis, you should also get tested for HIV and other STDs.
