

Syphilis Fact Sheet

What is Syphilis?

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection passed from person to person through direct contact, and is commonly passed on through oral, vaginal or anal intercourse with someone infected with Syphilis or with a visible Syphilis sore, also called a Chancre.

What are the symptoms (if any)?

Many people infected with syphilis do not have any symptoms for years, yet remain at risk for late complications if they are not treated. The first symptoms of Syphilis can appear from 10-90 days (average 21 days) after infection.

There are three stages of Syphilis infection: Primary, Secondary and Latent. Primary is marked by a sore that, left untreated, progresses to the Secondary stage the symptoms of which can include rashes, fever, swollen glands, sore throat, hair loss, headaches, and muscle aches. The latent stage progresses, and unknown to the carrier, may eventually damage internal organs, including the brain, nerves, eyes, heart, blood vessels, liver, bones, and joints.

How is it treated?

Syphilis is curable and can be treated with antibiotics.

You should abstain from sexual intercourse until your treatment is finished, and ensure that your sexual partners are also treated to avoid re-infecting each other.

What happens if you do not get treated?

If Syphilis is left untreated, there is an increased risk of getting other STIs, including HIV.

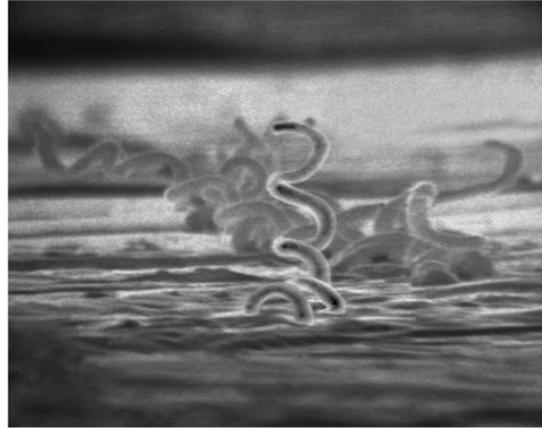


Image: CDC and Dr David Cox

Syphilis: Treponema pallidum

Those with untreated Syphilis can progress through all three stages of the disease.

In pregnant women, untreated Syphilis can cause miscarriages, premature births, stillbirths, or death of newborn babies. There is also risk to the baby of deformities, delays in development, or seizures, as well as other problems such as rashes, fever, swollen liver and spleen, anaemia, and jaundice. Rarely, the symptoms of Syphilis go unseen in infants so that they develop the symptoms of late-stage syphilis, including damage to their bones, teeth, eyes, ears, and brain.

Better2Know Testing Information

If you have symptoms you may get tested for Syphilis at any time with a blemish screen. If you do not have any symptoms you should wait 9 days after any incident you are concerned about before getting tested for Syphilis.

Better2Know's standard Syphilis test uses a blood sample to test for Syphilis. The blemish screen is a swab of a visible sore, spot or blemish for Syphilis.