



SYPHILIS

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What is it?

- Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by a bacteria.

Signs and Symptoms

- It occurs in three stages and takes 10 days to 3 months for symptoms to show up.
- **Stage 1** - painless open sore(s) usually around the genitals, rectum and/or mouth appear about 3 weeks after exposure
- **Stage 2** - occurs 4 to 10 weeks after the first stage; flu-like symptoms may be present and a body rash may appear on the palms of the hands, bottom of the feet or entire body
- These first 2 stages are highly contagious and can go unnoticed; this may last up to 1 year. Even without treatment, symptoms may go away but the infection is still there.
- **Stage 3** – may occur up to 3 years after stage 1 and may cause heart disease, brain damage or death

How do you get it?

- It is spread from one person to another by vaginal, oral or anal sex. It can also be spread from mother to child.

Treatment

- Syphilis is treated with penicillin shots. For people who are allergic to penicillin, other antibiotics are available.
- Even though a patient is treated, their blood tests will show infection for life. Keep a record of your treatment so that you can show it to any of your new doctors or other health professionals.
- Your doctor will do some blood tests to make sure your treatment did work.
- If diagnosed with syphilis, it is very important to notify your sexual partners so that they can be tested and treated as well.
 - A public health nurse can assist with this process.

Prevention

- Always use a condom, even if you are using other methods to prevent pregnancy.

For more information you can go to:
sexualhealthontario.ca

Syphilis is a reportable disease and must be reported to the Local Medical Officer of Health under the Health Protection and Promotion Act.