

LEARN ABOUT SYPHILIS



This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider

What is Syphilis?

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) that can cause serious health problems if it's not treated.

Who is at Risk?

- Anyone who has vaginal, anal, or oral sex without a condom with someone who has syphilis can become infected
- Gay and bisexual men get syphilis more often than others
- Some racial and ethnic minority groups are also more affected, especially with cases where babies are born with syphilis

How It Spreads

- You can get syphilis by touching a syphilis sore during vaginal, anal, or oral sex
- A pregnant woman with syphilis can pass it to her baby before birth
- You cannot get syphilis from things like toilet seats, doorknobs, swimming pools, hot tubs, bathtubs, sharing clothes, or eating utensils

How To Prevent Syphilis

If you are sexually active, you can lower your chances of getting syphilis by:

- Being in a long-term relationship with one partner who has tested negative for syphilis
- Using condoms correctly every time you have sex
- Knowing that condoms protect against sores they cover, but sores outside the condom area can still spread syphilis

Testing

You should get tested for syphilis if you:

- Are a gay or bisexual man
- Have HIV
- Take PrEP (medicine to help prevent HIV)
- Have a partner who tested positive for syphilis
- Live in a community with high rates of syphilis

Treatment

- Syphilis can be cured with antibiotics from a healthcare provider, but treatment cannot reverse any damage that has already happened
- You can get syphilis again even after being treated