

Fact Sheet

Syphilis.

womensnewbornhealth.com.au

What is Syphilis?

Syphilis is a sexually transmissible infection. Both men and women can become infected with syphilis.

How will you know if you have syphilis?

You may not notice any symptoms so you may not know you are infected. If symptoms do occur they may include:

- a painless sore in the area of sexual contact
- a rash (might be confined to one part of your body or spread over several parts, the bottom of feet or palms of hands)

How can you be checked for syphilis?

You can be checked for syphilis by having a blood test at a sexual health clinic or by your local doctor.

If your blood test is positive it will show whether you have had a recent or a past infection.

Even after you have been treated for syphilis your blood test will always show you have had syphilis.

How do you get syphilis?

Syphilis is usually spread by having sex with an infected person. Sex which places you at risk for syphilis includes:

- penis with vagina sex
- penis with anus sex (anal sex)
- penis with mouth sex (oral sex)
- vagina with mouth sex (oral sex)

Syphilis can also be transmitted during pregnancy from an infected mother to the developing baby.



What is the treatment for syphilis?

Syphilis is treated by antibiotic injections.

What if syphilis is not treated?

Untreated syphilis may damage your nerves, blood vessels and large organs.

Pregnancy and syphilis

Babies can be infected with syphilis from their mother during pregnancy or during birth. Untreated syphilis can cause birth defects and stillbirth.

However, women can receive treatment for syphilis during pregnancy.

Syphilis testing is routinely done with antenatal care.

What about partners?

Current and past sexual partners may will need to be screened.

Telling a partner is not always easy.
Sexual health counsellors can advise you on
the best way to do this

How do you prevent syphilis?

Safer sex practices such as using condoms and dams. Not having sex for 7 days after you have completed treatment.

Not having sex with any partners, current or previous from the last 3 months (primary syphilis) or 6 months (secondary syphilis) until they have been tested and if necessary treated for syphilis.

If you have any questions or worries please
phone the clinic and ask to speak to a nurse



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Western Sydney Sexual Health Centre
Jeffery House
162 Marsden Street Parramatta
02 9843 3124
Mon, Tues & Fri 0900 am - 0400 pm
Weds 1000 am - 0400 pm
Thurs 0400 pm - 0700 pm (appointment
only)

Kelly Close Services
Kelly Close Mt Druitt - 02 9881 1206
Mon 0900 am – 0400 pm
Weds & Fri 0900 am – 0100 pm

**We welcome further feedback on this brochure
as a way of continually improving our service.**

Send your feedback to:
WSLHD-Get_Involved@health.nsw.gov.au

