

SYPHILIS



Marion County
OREGON
Health & Human Services

WHAT IS SYPHILIS?

Syphilis is a bacterial infection. It is caused by the bacteria *treponema pallidum*. Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI).

HOW IS SYPHILIS SPREAD?

People can spread syphilis through sexual contact. This occurs during oral, anal, or vaginal sex. If a person is pregnant, they can also pass syphilis to the unborn baby.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF SYPHILIS?

Syphilis progresses in stages.

- **Primary:** one or many painless sores on the penis, vagina, anus, and/or mouth
- **Secondary:** skin rash, often on the hands and/or the feet, and/or sores in the mouth, anus, or vagina
- **Latent:** no visible signs or symptoms
- **Tertiary:** untreated syphilis can affect other parts of the body, like the heart and brain. This happens 10-30 years after becoming infected

At any stage, **neurosyphilis**, **ocular syphilis**, and **otosyphilis** can occur. Symptoms may consist of new:

- Severe headaches, muscle weakness/stiffness, changes in mental state
- Eye pain, blurry vision, floating spots, sensitivity to light, loss of vision
- Hearing loss, ringing or a buzzing in the ears. Also, dizziness or loss of balance

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR SYPHILIS?

Syphilis is treatable and curable with antibiotics. If you are diagnosed with syphilis, get treated right away to prevent damage.

HOW CAN YOU PREVENT AN INFECTION?

- Use condoms the right way every time you have sex
- Get tested at least once a year or between sex partners
- Talk with your sex partner(s) about testing and their infection status

FOLLOW UP

- Avoid having sex until at least 7 days after completing treatment
- Avoid having sex until any sore or lesion has scabbed over
- Retest for syphilis 3 months after getting treatment
- Notify sex partners that they should get tested

SCAN ME 

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