

Protect yourself!

- **Tell your partner(s) to get checked for syphilis.** If your partner isn't treated, you can get infected again.
- **Do not have sex with anyone** until you and your partner(s) are cured.
- **Follow your treatment plan.**
- **Go back to see your Family PACT provider** for a follow-up visit if they recommend it.
- **Always use a male or female condom when you have sex.** Your Family PACT provider can give you condoms and explain how to use them.
- **Ask your Family PACT provider about getting an HIV test.**
- **Ask your provider where you can get vaccines** that help protect against Hepatitis B and HPV infections.

Resources

To learn more about syphilis, call the CDC toll-free hotline at 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636).

For information about the Family PACT program and providers near you, call 1-800-942-1054 or visit www.familyfact.org.



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Syphilis

What You Need to Know

What is Syphilis?

Syphilis is a dangerous disease. At first you may not feel sick, but later it can cause serious health problems.

The first sign of syphilis is a sore that does not hurt. This is called a chancre. It may be on or around your vagina, penis, mouth or anus. It may be where you cannot see it. You may not know it is there. The sore goes away after a few days or weeks, **but the disease is still in your body.**

After a few weeks or months, you may have these signs:

- Rash
- Fever
- Sore throat
- New chancres
- Joint pain
- Loss of hair
- White patches in the mouth
- Wart-like sores around the anus

These signs go away, too. But the disease stays in your body. If it is not treated, **syphilis can last for many years.** It can go on to cause serious health problems.

How did I get it?

You got syphilis by having sex with someone who had it. You can also get syphilis in your mouth by having oral sex with someone who has it. People can have it and not know it. You can't tell by looking at someone if they have syphilis. The only way to know you have syphilis is to be tested by a health care provider.

What should I do?

Get treated. Your Family PACT provider will give you antibiotic shots or pills. **If you think you may be pregnant, tell your provider before you start your treatment.**

What else do I need to know?

Follow all of your Family PACT provider's instructions.

- You and your sexual partner(s) must get treated. Ask your Family PACT provider how you can get your partner treated.
- Follow your treatment plan, even if you feel better.
- Do not have sex while you are being treated.
- If you get a body rash, **call your clinic right away.**
- **If you have problems breathing, call 911.**
- Your Family PACT provider will ask you to come back to the clinic to make sure you are cured.
- Your provider will test you for other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). You can have more than one STD at a time. And, you can get syphilis more than once.

Why should I get treated?

Syphilis is a serious disease and can be fatal.

- If you don't get treated, you can give it to other sexual partners.
- If you are pregnant, syphilis could cause your baby to be born dead or with birth defects.

Syphilis can infect any organ in your body. It can cause:

- Blindness
- Heart disease
- Brain damage or insanity
- Death

When you have the chancre sore, it is easier for you to get HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) because of the open skin.

Antibiotics will cure syphilis and will help prevent these health problems. Your partner(s) must be treated. And, you need to return for testing to make sure your syphilis is cured.