

Syphilis



What is Syphilis?

Syphilis is a sickness that people can get from having sex without protection. It's called a sexually transmitted infection (STI).



What are the symptoms of syphilis?

- Some symptoms include a sore in the mouth, private parts, or bottom, a rash all over the body, especially on the hands or feet.
- Some people don't feel any symptoms at all.
- When syphilis gets into the nerves, it can cause problems with vision or feeling, like tingling or weakness.

How is syphilis diagnosed?

To find out if you have syphilis, the doctor will do a blood test and explain the results. Even after treatment, the test might still show positive.

What is the treatment?

- A shot of penicillin.
- Sometimes, more than one shot is needed, especially if it's been a while since your last test.
- Talk to your doctor about alternative medication if you are allergic to penicillin.

What should I tell my partner(s)?

It's important to tell your sexual partners if you have syphilis so they can get checked too. Health departments keep track of syphilis cases and may follow up with you to see if you have received treatment. They can also tell your partners anonymously.

How can I keep from getting syphilis?

To avoid getting syphilis, it's best to practice safe sex.

- Using condoms can help a lot.
- Doxycycline (DoxyPEP) is an antibiotic that can be taken after sex to prevent syphilis.
- Talk to your doctor about getting a prescription.

Appointments

MetroHealth's highly trained infectious disease specialists are here to help. Visit metrohealth.org/infectious-disease or call 216-778-8305.

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