



## SYPHILIS FACT SHEET

### WHAT IS SYPHILIS?

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by a bacterium.

### HOW DO YOU GET SYPHILIS?

Syphilis spreads by direct contact with a syphilis sore during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Syphilis can also spread from an infected mother to her unborn baby.

### SYMPTOMS

Symptoms typically appear 21 days after infection, but can range from 10 to 90 days. Syphilis is divided into stages, with different symptoms associated with each stage:

- Primary Syphilis- sore(s) appear at the original site of infection usually on or around the genitals, anus, rectum, or in or around the mouth. The sore usually lasts 3 to 6 weeks and heals regardless of whether or not you receive treatment. Even after the sore goes away, you must still receive treatment. This will stop your infection from moving to the secondary stage.
- Secondary Syphilis- rash, swollen lymph nodes, and fever.
- Latent stage- no symptoms.
- Tertiary Syphilis- associated with severe medical problems. It can affect the heart, brain, and other organs of the body.

### TREATMENT

Syphilis can be treated with antibiotics. Discuss treatment options with your doctor. Even after you've been successfully treated, you can still be re-infected. Follow-up testing by your health care provider is recommended to make sure that your treatment was successful.

### PREVENTION

- Abstinence (not having sex)
- Mutual monogamy (having sex with only one uninfected partner)
- Use latex condoms for vaginal, oral and anal sex.
- If you are pregnant, you should be tested for syphilis at least once during your pregnancy and receive immediate treatment if you test positive in order to protect your baby.

### DGHD EFFORTS

Reports of suspected and confirmed cases of disease are made to the Delaware General Health District (DGHD). The DGHD investigates potential sources of illness, conducts surveillance for the spread of disease, and engages in community outreach and education.