

Syphilis

What is syphilis?

Syphilis is a sexually transmissible infection (STI).

How do I know if I have syphilis?

Not everyone with syphilis has obvious signs of infection.

Symptoms may include:

- Primary or initial infection – a sore which is usually round, raised and not painful. This usually occurs in the genital or anal area, but may occur at other sites.
- Secondary syphilis - may involve a rash which usually affects the trunk, palms of hands and soles of the feet.
- There may also be lumps on the genitals, hair loss or swelling of the lymph glands. Syphilis may be detected from swabs taken from a sore or by a blood test.

How can I get syphilis?

Syphilis is passed on by having vaginal, anal or oral sex with someone who has the infection.

What is the treatment for syphilis?

The recommended treatment for syphilis is injections of penicillin. There is an alternative for those people with severe penicillin allergy. Do not have any sexual contact for 7 days after you start treatment as you may be at risk of passing syphilis to your sexual partners or becoming re-infected.

This period may be longer if you are treated with a penicillin alternative.

Do sexual partners need treatment?

All sexual partners within the last 6 months should be tested. Sexual partners of those with primary or secondary infection should be treated.

What else should I know?

- It is important to follow your doctor/nurse's instructions regarding follow up.
- Blood tests are usually performed after treatment to check the infection has responded to treatment.
- Condoms and lubricant reduce, but do not completely prevent syphilis.
- Regular testing can detect people with syphilis who don't have any obvious signs of infection.
- Men who have sex with men are encouraged to get sexual health checks, including syphilis tests, regularly or at least annually.

Video

Syphilis (Male)

<https://youtu.be/EGRZIH4QsnU>



Other Videos

Syphilis (Female) :

<https://youtu.be/7O8DnG0mCYE>

Screening for STIs

All sexually active people should consider regular testing for sexually transmissible infections.

Gold Coast Sexual Health Service offers express STI screening that is available without an appointment providing you:

- do not have symptoms
- have not been in contact with a sexually transmissible infection.

If you have symptoms, or have been in contact with an STI, contact Gold Coast Sexual Health Service for an appointment.

Check our website at: <https://www.goldcoast.health.qld.gov.au/our-services/sexual-health> for times and locations



Interpreter services

Gold Coast Health provides interpreter services for patients who are from non-English speaking backgrounds. If you require the assistance of an interpreter, please indicate this on your registration form and advise Gold Coast Health prior to your appointment.

Interpreter services are provided free of charge to all patients who require the service, including non-Medicare patients.



For further information or support, please contact:
Sexual health
Southport Community Centre
Room G4, 6 Lawson St, Southport, QLD, 4215
Phone: 1300 744 284