

# I Tested Positive for syphilis Now What



## I tested positive for syphilis, what's next?

- After you receive a positive test for syphilis, work with your healthcare provider to get treatment right away.
- It is very important to let your sexual partners know so that they can get tested and get treatment if they test positive.

## Is there a cure for syphilis?

- Yes, syphilis can be cured with the right antibiotics from your health care provider. But it's very important to get tested and start treatment quickly in order to avoid more serious health problems.

## Does this mean I can never get syphilis again?

- Even after infection, it is possible to get syphilis again. If you are treated, but your partner is not, you can get reinfected.
- Screening is recommended for sexually active adults at increased risk for syphilis infection.
- Screening is recommended at least annually for sexually active men who have sex with men, transgender and gender diverse people, and persons with HIV.
- Syphilis testing is recommended during pregnancy to protect the parent and baby.

## Should I tell my sexual partners?

- Yes. Telling a past or current partner gives that person the chance to get tested and, if needed, treated.
- If you are treated, but partners aren't, you can get reinfected.
- Syphilis can cause serious health problems, especially if not treated.

## Tips for Talking to a Sexual partner

- It's natural to feel worried, embarrassed, and even scared. But to protect your partner, it's a conversation you need to have.
- Being diagnosed with syphilis while in a relationship can bring up lots of emotions. You may question your trust in your partner or feel ashamed if you cheated. But keep in mind that some sexually transmitted infections like syphilis don't always show up right away. It's possible that you or your partner got syphilis in a previous relationship without even knowing it.
- Talk to your partner as soon as possible. Be honest. Listen and give your partner time to take in the information.
- If you and your partner have already had sex, stop having sex until you can both get tested, even if your partner doesn't have any symptoms. You and your partner will probably need treatment. Take any medicine exactly as your doctor prescribes.
- It may be awkward but telling partners about syphilis is the right thing to do.

## How can I protect myself from syphilis in the future?

- You can reduce your risk of getting syphilis by avoiding unprotected sex (sex without a condom).
- Some ways to protect yourself include only having sex with a person who has been tested for syphilis and other STIs and by using latex condoms **the right way** every time you have sex.

## How can I get help?

- If you need help getting to a clinic for testing or treatment, please contact your **local public health department**.
- Your local health department can contact your partners without releasing your information to let them know that they have been exposed to syphilis and provide information on how to get tested. Your healthcare provider may be able to help you notify your sexual partners as well.

