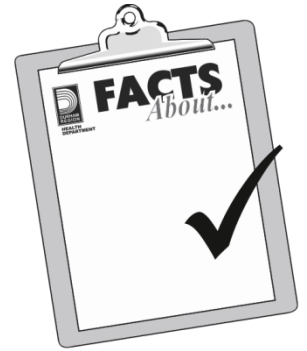




FACTS

About...



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

SYPHILIS

What is it?

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection caused by bacteria. Syphilis causes sores on your genitals (called chancres). The sores are usually painless, but they can easily spread the infection to others.

Syphilis is a reportable infection and must be reported to the Health Department.

How is it spread?

Syphilis is spread through vaginal, anal, and oral sex. You can get it when your vagina, penis, anus or mouth touches someone's syphilis sores. A mother can pass syphilis to her baby during pregnancy and childbirth.

What do I look for?

A syphilis sore(s) called a chancre appears anywhere between 3 weeks and 3 months after you get the infection. Chancres are usually firm, round, and painless, or sometimes open and wet. The sore(s) usually last about 3 to 6 weeks and then go away on their own with or without treatment. During the second stage, you may see a rash on your body, have mild flu like symptoms, sore throat, swollen glands, headache and muscle aches. These symptoms may go on from 2 to 6 weeks and then go away. Even though symptoms go away, you are still infected.

How is it treated?

Unless you get treated for syphilis, you will have the infections in your body and it can cause serious health problems. Syphilis is easily curable with antibiotics in the early stages. If you get treatment later, it will still cure the infection and stop further harm to your body. The course of treatment depends on the stage of infection. It is very important to complete treatment exactly as prescribed. Tell your healthcare provider if you are breastfeeding, pregnant or plan on becoming pregnant.

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For more information

Durham Region Health Department

905-666-6241 1-800-841-2729 durham.ca

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



How can I protect myself?

- Use condoms to lower the chance of catching sexually transmitted infections.
- Get tested for sexually transmitted infections if you have multiple partners.
- Return for follow-up blood tests with your health care provider or sexual health clinic.
- Tell all previous sexual partners that you have syphilis. They need to be tested.
- A nurse from the Health Department can contact your partner(s) without giving your name to let them know they are a contact for syphilis.
- Refrain from sexual activity until antibiotic treatment is completed.
- Avoid drinking alcoholic beverages while being treated with antibiotics.

March 14, 2019

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