

# Protect Against Syphilis and Congenital Syphilis

## SYPHILIS INFECTIONS ARE ON THE RISE.

Anyone who is sexually active can get syphilis, a treatable sexually transmitted infection (STI), and pregnant people with syphilis can pass it to their fetuses, which is known as congenital syphilis.

80%

Rates of syphilis increased by **80%** from 2018 to 2022.

10x

Newborns in 2022 were diagnosed with congenital syphilis **10 times** more than newborns in 2012.

90%

Almost **90%** of congenital syphilis cases could have been prevented with timely testing and treatment during pregnancy.








**Syphilis can be prevented by engaging in safe sex, and it can be treated and cured with antibiotics.**

**Symptoms of syphilis**—which include painless sores on the genitals, rectum, or mouth—can be hard to spot and easy to overlook. Some people may not have any symptoms.

**Without treatment**, syphilis can harm organs, including the brain, leading to severe lifelong issues or death. In pregnant people, syphilis can cause miscarriage, preterm birth, low birth weight, or stillbirth. Babies born with congenital syphilis face serious health problems, such as physical disabilities, vision loss, hearing loss, other permanent health conditions, and even death.



# Prevent Syphilis and Congenital Syphilis

-  **Follow guidance.** Use these tips to prevent syphilis and congenital syphilis. Have an honest and open talk with your health care provider; they can help guide you on prevention and treatment options.
-  **Use condoms the right way every time.** This goes for all sex acts—vaginal, anal, and oral. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers [fact sheets](#) on condom use in several languages.
-  **Be aware.** Sores can develop in areas you cannot see easily, such as the vagina, anus, and rectum. You can give people syphilis when they come into contact with these sores.
-  **Speak up.** If you think you may have been exposed or reexposed to syphilis, tell your health care provider right away to ensure quick treatment.
-  **Get tested.** See a health care provider and get tested annually for STIs, including syphilis. Test again for STIs before you have sex with any new partners and if you develop symptoms.
  - Get tested during pregnancy.** All pregnant people should be tested for syphilis at their first prenatal visit, at 28 weeks, and again at birth. All partners should also be tested.
-  **Notify partners.** Anyone who tests positive for syphilis should inform sexual partners from the past 12 months so they can get tested.
-  **Get treated.** To stop the spread of infection, anyone who tests positive for syphilis should get treated as soon as possible, and if you have syphilis, you should not have sexual contact with new partners until your syphilis sores completely heal. Antibiotics taken as directed will cure syphilis. Get reevaluated and retested at both 6 and 12 months post-treatment to ensure effectiveness.

**Treatment during pregnancy.** Congenital syphilis can be prevented if a pregnant person with syphilis receives antibiotic treatment at least 30 days before delivery. All partners should also be treated. Pregnant people with syphilis, as well as their partners, should not have sex with anyone for 7 days after finishing treatment to allow the antibiotics time to clear their infections and prevent syphilis from infecting or reinfecting their fetuses.

**Syphilis is a serious infection, but it can be prevented and treated.**

Visit the CDC webpage on [syphilis](#) to learn more about prevention, infection, and treatment, including during pregnancy.