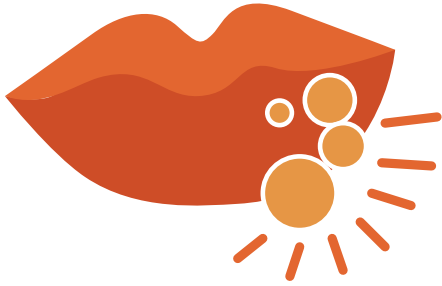
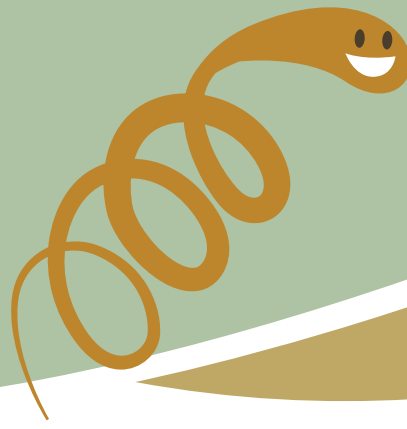
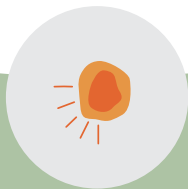


SYPHILIS



What is it?

Syphilis is a bacterial infection that can cause sores on or in the genitals, anus, rectum, and/or lips and mouth and can lead to other health complications.



Primary Stage:

A sore will appear where the infection entered your body. This is called a chancre. The chancre can be round, firm, painless, and sometimes wet. The chancre will disappear on its own, usually 3 to 6 weeks after it appears. Because many people do not see the sore, you may not even know that you have it.



Late Stage:

If untreated, secondary syphilis turns into late syphilis (also called latent or tertiary syphilis). This can develop from 2 to 30 years after primary syphilis takes place. The infection may still not show any signs at this point but the bacteria harms important organs such as the eyes, skin, bones, liver, kidneys and heart.



Secondary Stage:

A rash may appear on the chest, stomach, genitals, palms of your hands or soles of your feet, 2 weeks to 3 months after infection, and it may last 2 to 6 weeks. The rash usually does not itch, and can sometimes be hard to see. You may also feel sick like you have the flu.



Neurosyphilis:

At this stage, syphilis can affect the brain. When the brain is affected, changes in personality can occur, as can problems with thinking clearly and memory. Neurosyphilis can occur at any stage of syphilis.

How can you get it?

You can get syphilis through oral, vaginal, or anal sex with a partner who has syphilis. The infection is transmitted when your mouth, vagina, or anus comes into contact with the syphilis sore on your partner's mouth, vagina, or anus. Transmitting syphilis from mouth to mouth contact, like kissing, is very rare.



To know for sure if you have it, you need to get tested.

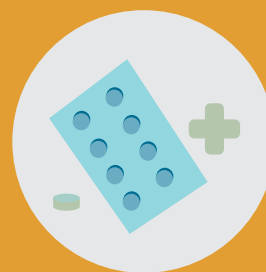
How do you know if you have it?

Many people with syphilis have no signs. **When signs of infection do happen, they usually take two to three weeks to appear. If left untreated, syphilis will go through different stages.**



Testing

Usually, testing is done by taking a sample of blood, but if you have a sore, the medical practitioner might take a swab of the sore. A test for syphilis will not show up positive until 3-4 weeks after the bacteria has been transmitted.



Treatment

Syphilis is very easy to treat using antibiotics during the early stages. Syphilis can be treated during the later stages as well using a different length and dosage of antibiotics. But remember, once syphilis starts causing problems with your organs, the damage that is done cannot be undone, so it's important to get tested regularly.



Native Women's
Association of Canada

L'Association des
femmes autochtones
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