

# Syphilis

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted disease that is caused by a bacterium called *Treponema pallidum*. It can spread from person to person during unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Syphilis can also be spread from a mother to her unborn baby.

## Symptoms

Symptoms usually appear 1-2 weeks after being exposed to syphilis

- A painless sore on the penis, scrotum, vagina, cervix, anus or mouth
- Rashes on the body (especially on the palms of hands and soles of feet)
- Swollen lymph glands
- Alopecia (loss of hair from the head or body)
- In late syphilis, the brain and heart may be affected
- You could have syphilis and not know it.

**If you think you have Syphilis** stop having sex and come to the DC Health and Wellness Center for a **CONFIDENTIAL** Assessment. *Free for DC Residents without insurance.*

## Treatment

- Syphilis can be treated with antibiotics. Penicillin “shots” are usually used.
- A single “shot” is often adequate during the early stages of syphilis. Multiple “shots” are used during later stages of the disease.
- Other antibiotics may be used in people who have an allergy to penicillin.
- **The DC Health and Wellness Center will test, diagnose, and treat Syphilis free of charge for those in need.**

## Prevention Tips

- Avoid unprotected sex. Always use a condom.
- Avoid infection by having one sexual partner.