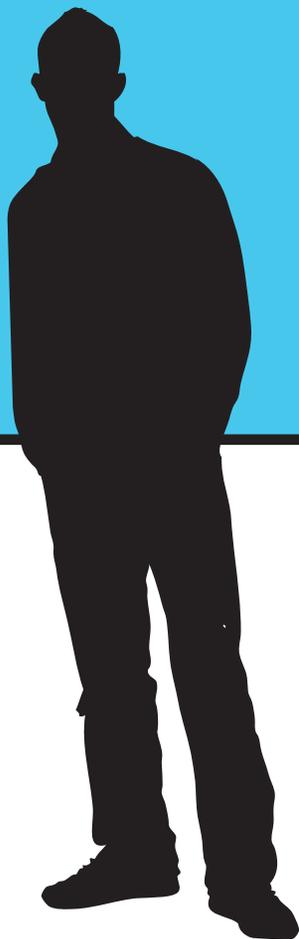


# HOW CAN YOU STAY HEALTHY?



# WHERE CAN YOU LEARN MORE?

# SYPHILIS FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

- The only sure way to avoid syphilis and other STDs is by not having sex. Vaginal, oral and anal sex can all pass the disease.
- If you choose to have sex, always use a latex condom. When used the right way, condoms can help prevent STDs.
- If you choose to have sex, stay with one partner who only has sex with you. Always use condoms unless tests show you and your partner do not have any STDs.
- Since sores can provide an entry point for HIV and other STDs, you should get tested for other STDs when testing for syphilis.

Many public health clinics provide STD testing and treatment for little or no cost. Your name and health records will be kept private. Visit [StompOut.org](http://StompOut.org) or call your local health department to find out how to get tested and protect yourself.



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# WHAT IS SYPHILIS?

Syphilis is a serious STD (sexually transmitted disease), caused by a germ you can get from sexual contact with the penis, vagina, mouth or anus of a person who has the disease. A pregnant woman can pass it to her unborn child.

## HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU HAVE IT?

Many people with syphilis look and feel fine. But you can still pass the disease to others even if you don't see any symptoms. Too many people don't find out they have it until they have severe health problems.

It often starts with a sore, called a chancre ("shank-er"). This sore mostly occurs on or near the sex organs, but can also occur near the mouth or anus. The sore does not hurt and goes away on its own after a few weeks, but you still have the disease.

## WHAT OTHER SYMPTOMS SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR?

- Rashes on the palms of hands, the bottoms of feet or other parts of the body
- Hair loss
- Headaches, fever and a sore throat
- Aches in the bones
- Swollen joints

Like the sores, these can go away with no treatment. But you still have the disease. If not treated over a period of years, it can cause:

- Arthritis
- Blindness
- Heart disease
- Brain damage
- Death

## HOW CAN YOU BE SURE?

The only way to be sure is to get tested by your doctor or at an STD clinic. One simple blood test can tell if you have the disease.

## WHAT IF YOU'RE PREGNANT?

All pregnant women should be tested for syphilis at their first pre-natal visit and at delivery. Without treatment, a mother may have a stillbirth (baby born dead) or have a baby born with severe health problems.

## HOW DO YOU TREAT SYPHILIS?

- Syphilis can be cured with medicine from a doctor.
- Call your doctor right away if the medicine gives you problems.
- Tell your sex partners to get tested, or have your local clinic tell them.
- Don't have sex until your doctor says you are safe.
- Don't try to treat yourself.

## WHEN SHOULD YOU GET A TEST?

- If you or your partner(s) show any symptoms.
- If you've had more than one sex partner. (The more partners you have, the greater your risk.)
- If your partner tells you that he or she has been tested or treated for an STD.
- If you have other STDs.
- If you have had sex without a condom.

