

Congenital Syphilis is on the Rise!

What Is Congenital Syphilis?

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Congenital Syphilis (CS) occurs when syphilis is transmitted from mother to infant during pregnancy and/or at delivery.

Congenital Syphilis can cause serious health problems for the baby like miscarriage, stillbirth, premature birth, and/or birth defects. Not all babies born with congenital syphilis will show symptoms at birth.

There is treatment for babies with CS, but they need to be treated **right away** or they could develop serious health problems months or even years later. It is also important that babies get the proper follow-up care based on medical advice.

How Common Is Congenital Syphilis?

In the United States, Congenital Syphilis (CS) has been on the rise for the last eight years. In 2018, the number of CS cases was the highest since 1995.

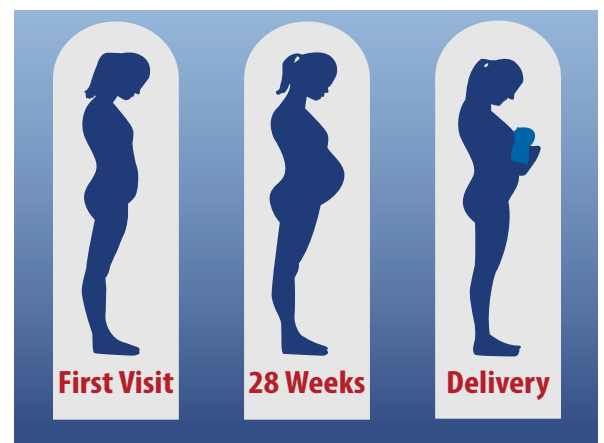
In Texas in 2019, the number of CS cases reported was the highest since 1993. In 2019, approximately 1 in 750 Texas babies was born with congenital syphilis.

Do I Need to Get Tested for Syphilis?

Yes. Getting tested for syphilis and other STDs is part of routine prenatal care. **All persons who are pregnant are required by Texas law to be tested for syphilis three times during pregnancy:**

1. At the **first prenatal visit**
2. In the **third trimester** (no sooner than 28 weeks' gestation or six and half months into your pregnancy), and
3. Again at **delivery**.

If you haven't been tested during these visits, make sure you talk to your doctor about getting tested at your next check-up.



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Many people can have syphilis and not know it. Some people have symptoms like a sore or a rash but the only way to know for sure if you have syphilis is to get a simple blood test.

Getting tested routinely at your annual exam is another way to know your syphilis status. You may need to ask to be tested since syphilis testing is not part of most physicals or Pap tests.

What Should I Do If I Am Diagnosed With Syphilis?

If you are diagnosed with syphilis, be sure to get treatment right away and complete treatment following medical advice. If you are pregnant, your baby gets treated when you get treated! Syphilis can be treated and cured with antibiotics. Make sure your sex partner(s) are treated too! Your local health department can help with getting your partner(s) tested and treated.

When Should I Start Prenatal Care?

As soon as you think you might be pregnant you should go to the doctor. Starting care early and getting frequent check-ups will help you and your baby stay healthy. If you are worried about the cost of care or do not have insurance, find out more about [Texas Benefits for Pregnant Women](#) or call 877-345-7734 (Texas Pregnancy Care Network). You can also review available [Texas Benefits online](#).

Where Can I Get Tested for Syphilis and Other STDs?

You can find [clinics](#) in your area to get tested at or find a doctor through [Healthy Texas Women](#).

Resources

STD testing locations - dshs.texas.gov/hivstd/testing/

Texas Benefits for Pregnant Women - hhs.texas.gov/services/health/medicaid-chip/programs-services/women/medicaid-pregnant-women-chip-perinatal

Texas Benefits - yourtexasbenefits.com

Healthy Texas Women - healthytexaswomen.org/find-doctor

FACTS TO CONSIDER

Syphilis is curable at all stages

Syphilis can be passed to the baby at any time during the pregnancy

Congenital syphilis is preventable

DSHS HIV/STD Program

(737) 255-4300

dshs.texas.gov/hivstd/

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