

If you think you may have syphilis

You can go to a sexual health clinic for a check up. You can ring for an appointment or sometimes drop in. At the clinic staff may ask you to take a simple blood test. If you have syphilis you will be given an injection or tablets which will cure it.

For names and addresses of sexual health clinics call:

Sexwise 0800 28 29 30

Sexual Health Information Line 0800 567 123

NHS Direct 0845 4647

Or check out www.ruthinking.co.uk and www.playingsafely.co.uk

Sexual health clinics are free and confidential. Staff cannot tell anyone you have visited the clinic without your permission unless they believe you or someone else is in serious danger.

Try telling your boyfriend or girlfriend if you think you have syphilis. If you do have syphilis it's very important you tell them so you both get treatment.

Questions you should ask at the clinic

At the clinic, the staff want to make sure you get the best treatment possible. So when you are at the clinic you should always ask the nurse or doctor:

- 1 – what is wrong with me?**
- 2 – what do I need to do?**
- 3 – why should I do it?**

Their answers will help you to know what to do to get better and stay healthy.

If you want to know more about syphilis or want any further help and advice about sex or sexual health call **Sexwise 0800 28 29 30.**

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You need to know ALL about
SYPHILIS

Information
and advice

NHS

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Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection.

Although it is not very common, in recent years more people are catching syphilis in the UK.

You can get syphilis through having sex.

You can have syphilis for many years and not have any signs or symptoms.

Syphilis is an infection caused by bacteria.

Both men and women can get syphilis.

It's easy to test to see if you have syphilis.

Syphilis can be treated with an injection or, sometimes, tablets. It can lead to serious health problems if it is not treated.




Syphilis and young women

A pregnant woman who has syphilis can give her baby syphilis. All pregnant women are tested for syphilis and can be treated. The treatment will not harm the baby and it will stop the baby getting syphilis.

How do I protect myself against syphilis?

Using a condom is the best way to protect yourself against syphilis.

When you use a condom remember to:

- not use a condom that is past its 'use by' date, which is written on the packet
- only use condoms that have this on the side 
- use a new condom each time you have sex
- put a condom on before your genitals (penis and vagina) touch

Condoms come in all shapes and sizes, so find the best one for you.

You can get infected with syphilis again, so using a condom will help stop this happening. Condoms can help protect you from most sexually transmitted infections and help avoid pregnancy.

How do you catch syphilis?

You can catch syphilis by having unprotected vaginal, anal or oral sex (sex without a condom) with someone who already has syphilis. This person may not know they have syphilis.

You can get more than one sexually transmitted infection at the same time.

If you have syphilis

Some people do not notice the signs or symptoms. The symptoms come in three stages. Syphilis can be treated during all these three stages to stop you getting more unwell.

Stage one is a few weeks after you catch syphilis when:

- men can get a painless sore on their penis, around their anus (bumhole) or around the mouth
- women can get a painless spot near the vagina or in the vagina (on the cervix), around their anus (bumhole) or around the mouth

Stage two is a few weeks after stage one when:

- men and women may then get a special rash anywhere on the body and feel unwell

These symptoms will go away but you still have syphilis.

Stage three can happen many years later and it can make you very ill. It can cause serious health problems for your heart or brain.