

Syphilis Outbreak

November 12, 2019

There is a syphilis outbreak in Alberta.

Syphilis is an infection caused by bacteria. You get syphilis by direct contact with someone who has a syphilis sore during oral, anal or vaginal sex. This contact may have happened at any time in your life without you knowing it happened. Not everyone who becomes infected has signs of the disease. It does not go away without treatment.

Untreated syphilis in pregnancy can cause problems such as miscarriage, birth defects and stillbirth. Syphilis is passed from mother to baby during pregnancy and birth. Syphilis that passes from the mother to the baby is called congenital syphilis. It can damage your baby's bones, teeth, vision, hearing and brain development. It can also cause low red blood cells and seizures. **It is serious.**

A simple syphilis screening blood test can tell if you have syphilis. **Syphilis is treatable.** A doctor, midwife or nurse practitioner can test for the infection and give you medicine to cure it. The medication will prevent the infection from being passed on to your baby.

You can be re-infected with syphilis even if you have been treated in the past. Your sexual partners need to be tested so they can be cured too.

All women should be screened for syphilis during pregnancy. If you are pregnant, ask your doctor, midwife or nurse practitioner about testing.

The spread of syphilis can be stopped.

Call your doctor or HealthLink at 811 if you want more information.

