

## What is syphilis?

- It is a sexually transmitted disease (STD). It can cause long-term complications if not treated. Symptoms are divided into four stages: primary, secondary, latent, and late.

## What are the signs and symptoms per stage?

### *Primary:*

- Firm, round, and painless sores
- Single or multiple sores
- Sore lasts 3-6 weeks and heals regardless of whether or not you received treatment

### *Secondary:*

- Rough, red, or brown spots on palms of hands/feet, skin rashes and/or sores in mouth, vagina, or anus
- Rash in one or more areas of your body
- May appear while primary sore is healing or several weeks after healed
- Other symptoms: fever, swollen lymph glands, sore throat, patchy hair loss, headaches, and fatigue
- Sores will go away regardless of whether or not you received treatment

### *Latent and Late Stages:*

- If you do not receive treatment at the above stages, you can continue to have syphilis in your body for years without signs or symptoms
- Late stage occurs 10-30 years after infection began
- Symptoms include difficulty coordinating muscle movements, paralysis, numbness, blindness, and dementia
- Disease damages internal organs and can result in death

## How is it spread?

- Oral, anal, or vaginal sex with someone who have not been treated
- May also be spread through skin-to-skin contact with rash or sores on an infected person
- An 'early' case (infected for one year or less, such as during primary or secondary stages) can more easily spread the infection to their sex partners
- Passes to the unborn fetus if the mother is infected

## How is it diagnosed and treated?

- Primary care provider evaluation and laboratory testing
- Or make an appointment at the Genesee County Health Department STD Clinic, 810-257-3139
- Treatment is with injections of antibiotics (depending on stage)

## How can syphilis be prevented?

- Best way to avoid STDs is to not have vaginal, anal, or oral sex
- If you are sexually active:
  - Use latex condoms the right way
  - Limit your number of sexual partners
  - Consider a partner who has been tested and is negative for STDs
  - Have regular exams

## If I have any other questions, whom can I contact?

- Call the Genesee County Health Department, 257-1017