

### What is it?

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection. It's a bacterial infection that spreads by having unprotected sex or through using unclean needles or an unscreened blood transfusion. Syphilis is diagnosed with a blood test. The infection starts as a painless sore on the genitals, rectum or mouth. It can then develop into a rash or more serious symptoms. Syphilis is treated with antibiotics, and it's important to get treated as soon as possible. You will also need to tell your past sexual partners so they can be treated.

### What will my GP do now?

Your GP will give you information about:

- Your treatment and testing for other sexually transmitted infections
- Starting the **contact tracing** process
- Safe-sex strategies, prevention and birth control
- Related issues like pelvic inflammatory disease
- Resources and support.
- If a referral for a counsellor or specialist if necessary

You may need a referral to a sexual health specialist if:

- You are allergic to penicillin
- You are pregnant
- Your case is complex
- You have another infection, such as HIV

### What will my GP do in the future?

Your GP may see you again in three, six and 12 months for further tests to ensure the infection is gone. If you are pregnant, re-testing is needed five weeks after your treatment has finished.

### What can I do?

It's important you follow your treatment instructions carefully. Besides getting healthy, you need to make sure everyone you've had sex with recently knows to get tested too to stop them spreading the infection to others.

### What supports are available?

The **Liverpool Sexual Health Clinic** offers testing and diagnosis. As well as helping you with contact tracing, staff can help you manage and cope with your STI diagnosis. You can either ask your GP to refer you or contact the clinic directly on **9827 8022** or visit the clinic at Ground Floor, 13 Elizabeth Street, Liverpool.

### Where can I learn more?

If you'd like to read more about syphilis and sexual health, the following resource list can help:

- **Health Direct Australia** – syphilis: [healthdirect.gov.au](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au)
- **Health Translations** – syphilis (multilingual resources): [healthtranslations.vic.gov.au](https://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au)
- **NSW STI Programs Unit** – syphilis: [stipu.nsw.gov.au](https://www.stipu.nsw.gov.au)



### What questions could I ask my doctor?

- What medicine do I need to take?*
- How can I prevent re-infection?*
- Am I at risk of any complications?*
- Will my family and friends find out?*