

# SYPHILIS

People once thought this sexually transmitted infection (STI) was wiped out. But syphilis is once again infecting many people because they don't know the facts.

## FAST FACTS

- Over 35,000 new cases in 1999
- Men between ages 20-39 are the most infected
- Three out of four people infected with syphilis in 1999 were African-American

## PUTTING YOURSELF AT RISK

Vaginal, oral or anal sex are the most common ways to spread syphilis. But syphilis can be spread by any contact with an infected person's sores.

## LOOKING FOR SIGNS/SYMPTOMS

Painless sores, called *chancres*, appear on vagina, penis, anus, scrotum or mouth. The chancres disappear in a few weeks.

Then a brown, spotty rash will appear on the backs of hands and palms. The rash also disappears in a few weeks.

After that, there is no outward sign of infection as syphilis damages your body.

Some people never show outward signs of infection. Getting tested is the only way to know for sure.

AVOID INFECTION  
GET TESTED!



## HOW SYPHILIS AFFECTS YOUR HEALTH

Syphilis can kill you if left untreated. It can cause blindness and paralysis.

It damages your brain, liver, heart and bones.

Pregnant women infected with syphilis risk the life of their babies—many are stillborn or die shortly after birth.

## TREATING SYPHILIS

Syphilis can be cured by a doctor. But syphilis can cause serious damage if not treated early.

## THE WAY TO GO

- Avoid all sexual contact and contact with syphilis chancres
- Have sex with only one, uninfected partner who only has sex with you.
- Use a condom during all types of sexual contact—vaginal, oral or anal
- Get tested for infection once a year by your doctor or at a clinic

GOODBYE