

# Congenital Syphilis: What you need to know



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**  
Division of Public Health

Congenital syphilis occurs when syphilis infection is passed to the baby during pregnancy or delivery. Babies born with congenital syphilis may not always have symptoms at birth. If left untreated, babies may develop symptoms later and can die from the infection.



**Congenital syphilis can be prevented through testing and treatment.**

## How can untreated syphilis affect the baby?



### During Pregnancy

- Lose the baby/Miscarriage
- Stillbirth
- Born early/premature
- Low birth weight
- Death shortly after birth



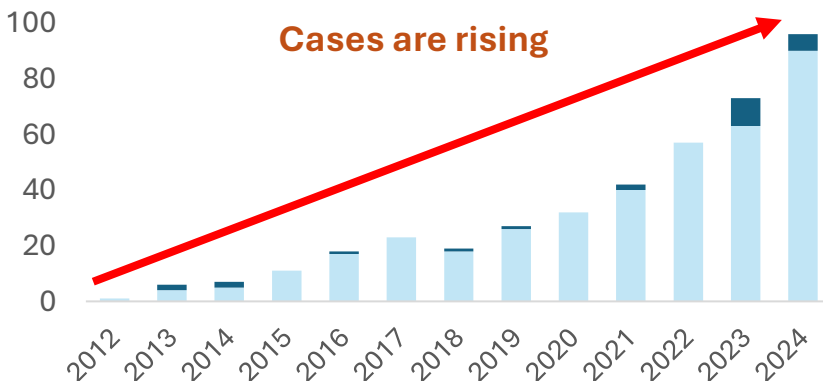
### After birth/Delivery

- Deformed bones
- Severe anemia
- Skin rashes
- Jaundice
- Meningitis

## Congenital Syphilis in North Carolina: What we know.

North Carolina Congenital Syphilis Cases

■ Live Birth ■ Stillbirth or neonatal death



In 2024, cases increased 9500% compared to 2012.

Cases increased among most racial and ethnic groups.

Cases increased in urban and rural communities.

Flip for prevention and community resources



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## How can I prevent my baby from getting syphilis?

- Support women to be linked to care early in pregnancy.
- Ensure ALL pregnant women are tested at their **first prenatal care visit, between 28 – 30 weeks gestation, and at delivery. This is NC Public Health Law!**
- Ensure babies born with syphilis are properly treated before being discharged.

## What is the recommended treatment?

- People who test positive for syphilis can be treated using Penicillin.



### Where can I locate available resources in the community?

Syphilis Rates Map



Syphilis Resources for Providers



CDC STI Treatment Guidelines



Free STD Test Locator



# Syphilis: What you need to know

## Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI).

People can get it through vaginal, anal and or oral sex. It develops in stages and is most contagious during the early stages (*primary and secondary*) of the infection.



**It can be hard to tell if you have syphilis.** The only way to know for sure is to get tested.



**If you test positive, you should get treated right away to stop the infection from progressing.** Syphilis infection can be treated with antibiotics. **Sex partners should be treated as well.**



**Syphilis can be passed to babies during pregnancy or delivery.** Syphilis in a baby is called congenital syphilis. It can be avoided through timely testing and treatment during pregnancy.

Anyone who is pregnant should receive syphilis testing at their **first prenatal care visit, between 28-30 weeks gestation, and at delivery.**

**This is NC Public Health Law**

**ALL babies born with syphilis must be treated right away.** Some babies may not have symptoms at birth. If left untreated, babies may develop symptoms later and can die from the infection.

