

SYPHILIS

What is Syphilis?

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted disease caused the bacteria (germ) called Treponema Pallidum.

How does Syphilis spread?

Syphilis can spread

- ❖ By direct contact from person to person during sexual intercourse.
- ❖ From an infected mother to her baby during pregnancy or childbirth (congenital syphilis).

What are the signs and symptoms of syphilis?

A mother infected with syphilis that has not been treated for syphilis or has been treated late in her pregnancy has a 40% to 70% chance of infecting her baby with the disease. An infected baby may have symptoms at birth or show signs of syphilis in a few weeks. These symptoms include skin sores, very runny nose (sometimes with a bloody discharge), patches in the mouth, inflamed arm and leg bones, swollen liver, anemia and jaundice. Others symptoms of syphilis may develop later in life (late onset syphilis).

How can syphilis be diagnosed?

Material from sores can be collected and germs causing syphilis can be directly seen under a microscope. Blood tests are also available to check for syphilis. These tests are safe and accurate.

Can syphilis be cured?

Syphilis can be treated with penicillin but babies diagnosed with syphilis need proper medical evaluation and testing.

Why is syphilis important in International Adoptions?

Although risk of syphilis is low, it is a treatable disease. In many countries, mothers do not have access to pre-natal care and do not receive testing to diagnose or treat syphilis during pregnancy. Additionally, treatment given abroad may be inadequate for completely curing the disease. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all international adoptees be tested for syphilis in the immediate post-adoptive period.