

**Key Syphilis Messages for**

# Frontline Workers

**Have you been tested for syphilis recently?**

**There is an ongoing syphilis outbreak in the NWT.**

Lots of the cases are here in Yellowknife.

**Frontline workers are uniquely positioned**  
to support syphilis outbreak response and congenital syphilis prevention work.

Established trusted relationships and ongoing interactions offer an opportunity to provide brief education using the following key messages to increase the public understanding of the risk of untreated syphilis and, the importance of getting tested - especially while pregnant.

*Une version française est disponible.*

Government of  
Northwest Territories



# General Syphilis Information

## What is syphilis?

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection and it is very easy to treat if you do have it.

- At first, syphilis can cause sores, rashes, mouth ulcers, or other noticeable symptoms. These symptoms may go away on their own but that does not mean the infection is gone. Antibiotics are needed to cure syphilis.
- Leaving syphilis untreated over time can cause severe damage to the body, brain, blood vessels, heart, and bones. If it continues to progress untreated, syphilis can eventually lead to death.
- You could give syphilis to someone else because you didn't know you had it.
- Syphilis is very easy to treat if you do have it. Often it is just one dose of antibiotics.

## Congenital Syphilis Information

Syphilis can be passed to an unborn baby, if someone has untreated syphilis while pregnant. This is called congenital syphilis.

- Congenital syphilis can cause very serious health issues including stillbirth, neonatal death, or severe, life-long chronic health conditions.
- If you have syphilis, it is very easy to treat.
- If you have syphilis, your partner should also get tested and treated. If you get treated but your partner does not, you can get syphilis again.
- It can be passed from your partner to you and then to your unborn baby when pregnant.

## If you are pregnant

It is important to get tested at least 3 times during your pregnancy.

- In the first trimester,
- At 28-30 weeks, and
- Around the time of delivery.



Even if you're thinking about getting pregnant, take a syphilis test first.

## How to access testing

- If you would like to get tested, I can help you book an appointment now? OR
- If you would like to get tested, I can give you the phone number to make an appointment.

<sup>†</sup> Service providers looking for additional information about syphilis, 811 is a great resource to ask questions to a nurse.