



## How do I protect myself?

### Tip #1: Use condoms.

Condoms stop syphilis from spreading by preventing contact with sores. Touching sores that aren't covered can still spread syphilis.

### Tip #2: Avoid alcohol and drugs.

Drinking alcohol and using drugs can lead to unsafe sex. Avoiding alcohol and drugs can help prevent spreading syphilis.

### Tip #3: Talk to your sexual partner(s).

It's not always obvious that a sex partner has syphilis because syphilis sores can be hidden. Unless you know that your sex partner(s) has been tested and treated, you can be at risk.

### Tip #4: Get tested regularly.

If you have more than one sexual partner, get tested every 6 months. Syphilis is curable.

## Where can I go if I need free condoms?

### [WWW.LACONDOM.COM](http://WWW.LACONDOM.COM)

Free condoms can be mailed from the website to your home. You can also pick them up at nearly 300 sites in Los Angeles County.

## Who do I call if I need more information?

Los Angeles County,  
Department of Public Health,  
Division on HIV & STD Programs  
STD Hotline: 1-800-758-0880  
[www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/dhsp](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/dhsp)



For more information on HIV and STD prevention, visit [www.GetProtectedLA.com](http://www.GetProtectedLA.com).

# Syphilis:

## What Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM) Need to Know



## What is syphilis?

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by bacteria (germs). Many of its signs and symptoms are the same as other diseases.

## How does syphilis spread?

Syphilis is passed from person-to-person during vaginal, anal or oral sex. It can also pass through skin-to-skin contact with a syphilis sore. Pregnant people with syphilis can also pass the disease to their unborn child during pregnancy.

## What are the signs of syphilis?

Syphilis has different stages with different signs. Many people who have syphilis don't have signs for years.

- **Primary syphilis:** A painless sore on, around, or inside the penis, vagina, mouth, or anus that sometimes lasts 2-6 weeks and disappears by itself.
- **Secondary syphilis:** A contagious rash may appear on the body, hands, and feet. These symptoms may come and go for about 1 year.
- **Latent syphilis:** Symptoms usually go away by themselves, and the person is no longer contagious to sex partners.
- **Tertiary syphilis:** This stage is very rare. Symptoms are more severe and cause serious damage to your body's organs.

## How is syphilis treated?

Syphilis is easily treated and cured with antibiotics. This medicine is given as a shot. Make sure both you and your sex partner(s) complete the treatment before having sex again.

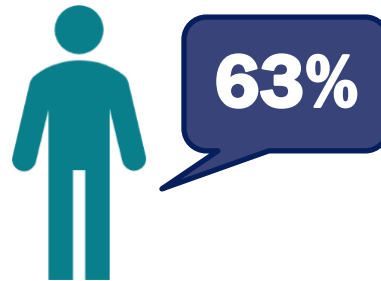
## 5 Facts about Syphilis in Los Angeles County

Learn more and be aware of your risk.

**Fact #1:** In 2019, 48% of MSM with syphilis reported meeting sex partners on the internet.

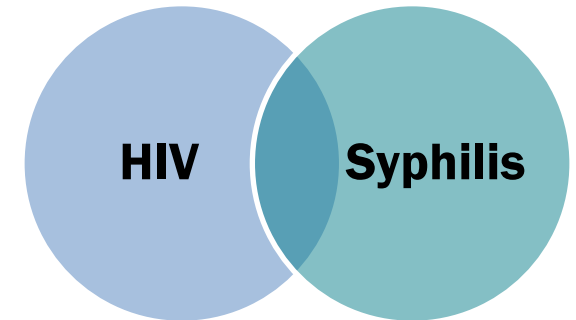


**Fact #2:** In 2019, 63% of MSM with syphilis reported having anonymous sex.



**Fact #3:** MSM of color are the most affected community in LA County.

**Fact #4:** In 2019, 56% of MSM in LA County had both syphilis and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).



**Fact #5:** The risk of getting HIV is higher for MSM who have syphilis.

