Update on Syphilis in Women and Congenital Syphilis for Prenatal Providers

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California Department of Public Health
STD Control Branch
Overview

• Summarize epidemiologic trends in syphilis in women and congenital syphilis in California
• Describe syphilis stages and clinical manifestations
• Review recommended treatment for syphilis
• Describe characteristics of congenital syphilis cases in California
Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, and Early Syphilis

Chlamydia (N=198,503)
- 504.4

Gonorrhea (N=64,677)
- 164.3

Early Syphilis (N=11,222)
- 28.5
Early Syphilis*, Number of Cases by Gender & Gender of Sex Partners, California, 1996–2016

* Includes primary, secondary, and early latent syphilis.
Female Early Syphilis* Cases
California, 2009–2016

2012-2016
Cases ↑ 450%

* Includes primary, secondary, and early latent syphilis.
Early Syphilis*
Incidence Rates by Gender and Age Group (in years)
California, 2016

Rate per 100,000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>15-19</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes primary, secondary, and early latent syphilis.
Early Syphilis*, Incidence Rates by County and Gender
California, 2016

* Includes primary, secondary, and early latent syphilis.
Early Syphilis*
Incidence Rates for Females by Race/Ethnicity
California, 2007–2016

* Includes primary, secondary, and early latent syphilis.

Note: NA/AN = Native American/Alaskan Native, A/PI = Asian/Pacific Islander.
Race/ethnicity “Not Specified” ranged from 0% to 6.7% of cases for females in any given year.

MSM=Men who have sex w/men, MSW=Men who have sex w/women, MSM&W=Men who have sex with men & women

* Includes primary, secondary, and early latent syphilis.
California congenital syphilis cases represented 33% of all CS cases in the U.S. in 2016.

Note: The Modified Kaufman Criteria were used through 1989. The CDC Case Definition (MMWR 1989; 48: 828) was used effective January 1, 1990. California data prior to 1985 include all cases of congenital syphilis, regardless of age.
## Congenital Syphilis — States With Highest Number of Cases and Highest Rates per 100,000 Live Births, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States with Highest Number of Cases:</th>
<th>States with Highest Rates:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rank</strong></td>
<td><strong>State</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
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</table>
Congenital Syphilis Cases versus Female Early Syphilis* Incidence Rates, California, 2010–2016

Early Syphilis Rate per 100,000 Females of Childbearing Age (15-44 years)

Number of Congenital Syphilis Cases

- Number of Congenital Cases
- Early Syphilis Rate

2012-2016 Congenital Syphilis Cases ↑ >500%

* Includes primary, secondary, and early latent syphilis.
Syphilis 101

• Causative organism: *Treponema pallidum*, a spirochete bacterium

• Transmission:
  – Sexual (intimate skin-to-skin contact)
  – Vertical
  – Blood

• Causes systemic infection

• Characterized by episodes of active disease during which patients have signs/symptoms of infection, interrupted by periods of latent infection
  – Lab testing is required to diagnose patients

• Incubation period: 10-90 days
Prevention of congenital syphilis requires prevention/treatment of maternal syphilis
Syphilis Natural History

Exposure 30-50% → Primary 2-6 weeks → Secondary → Latent 25% → Tertiary 30%

- Incubation Period: 3-4 weeks
- Possible relapse
- After 3-8 weeks lesions disappear spontaneously

Neurosyphilis can occur at any stage
Primary Syphilis

- Chancre (ulcer) appears 10-90 days after infection
  - Single, painless, indurated, clean-based lesion with rolled edges (textbook chancre)
  - More likely to be multiple lesions and persisting at the time of secondary syphilis in HIV-infected patients
  - Can go unrecognized
- Can have regional adenopathy (rubbery, bilateral, painless)
Secondary Syphilis

- Usually occurs 3-6 weeks after primary chancre
  - Rash (75-90%), involving palms/soles (60%)
  - Generalized lymphadenopathy (70-90%)
  - Constitutional symptoms (50-80%)
  - Mucous patches (5-30%)
  - Condyloma lata (5-25%)
  - Patchy alopecia (10-15%)
  - Symptoms of neurosyphilis (1-2%)
  - Less common: meningitis, hepatitis, arthritis, nephritis

Courtesy: Gregory Melcher, UC Davis
Susan Philip, SF DPH & UCSF
Latent Syphilis

- No symptoms
- Relapse possible in early latent
- Important to treat to:
  - Prevent complications
  - Prevent transmission from pregnant woman to fetus
Syphilis Staging Flowchart

**SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS?**

**YES**
- Chancre
- Rash, etc.

**NO**
- **LATENT**
  - ANY IN PAST YEAR?
    - Negative syphilis serology
    - Known contact to an early case
    - Good history of typical signs/symptoms
    - 4-fold increase in titer
    - Only possible exposure was this year

**YES**
- **EARLY LATENT** (< 1 year)

**NO**
- **LATE LATENT** or **UNKNOWN DURATION**
Treatment is Based on Duration of Infection

- PRIMARY, SECONDARY, and EARLY LATENT (< 1 year)
  - Benzathine penicillin G 2.4 million units IM in a single dose

- LATE LATENT or UNKNOWN DURATION
  - Benzathine Penicillin G 2.4 million units once per week for 3 weeks**

**In pregnancy, should adhere to 7 days between doses

*Bicillin L-A is the trade name. DO NOT USE Bicillin C-R!*

CDC 2015 STD Treatment Guidelines
www.cdc.gov/std/treatment
Syphilis Treatment Alternatives for Penicillin Allergic Non-Pregnant Adults

Primary, Secondary, & Early Latent
- Doxycycline 100 mg po bid x 2 weeks
- Tetracycline 500 mg po qid x 2 weeks
- Ceftriaxone 1 g IV (or IM) qd x 10-14 d
- Azithromycin 2 g po in a single dose*

Late Latent
- Doxycycline 100 mg po bid x 4 weeks
- Tetracycline 500 mg po qid x 4 weeks

In pregnancy, benzathine penicillin is the only recommended therapy. No alternatives.

* Do NOT use azithromycin in MSM or pregnant women
Who Should be Screened for Syphilis?

- Pregnant women at first prenatal visit
  - And again in the third trimester and at delivery (if at high risk, or residing in area with high syphilis morbidity)

- MSM, including those on PrEP
  - Annually, or more frequently, 3-6 months if at high risk (multiple, anonymous partners, meth use)

- Correctional settings
  - Universal screening based on local area or institutional incidence

- HIV-infected individuals (at least annually)

- STD clinics / Clients with other STDs
USPSTF Syphilis Screening
Updated Recommendations in 2016

Non-Pregnant Adult/Adolescents
• USPSTF recommends screening in persons at increased risk for infection (Grade “A” recommendation)
  – Risk Assessment
    • MSM and HIV-infected individuals “highest risk for syphilis”
    • Other factors associated with increased prevalence rates include: history of incarceration or CSW, geography, race/ethnicity, male <29 yrs
  • Optimal screening interval not well established
    – More frequent in MSM/HIV+ suggested by some data
      • Every 3 months enhances detection compared to annually

Diagnosing Syphilis

• Syphilis is diagnosed by:
  – Reviewing patient history
  – Assessing sexual risk
  – Conducting a physical exam
  – Interpreting serologic test results
Syphilis Screening Paradigm

**REVERSE SEQUENCE**

**Treponemal tests (e.g., EIA, CIA, MBIA)**
- *TP-SPECIFIC ANTIBODIES*
- QUALITATIVE
- USUALLY DETECTABLE FOR LIFE
  - REACTIVITY DECLINES WITH TIME

**Non-treponemal tests (e.g., RPR, VDRL)**
- NON-SPECIFIC ANTIBODIES TO LIPOIDAL ANTIGENS
  - QUANTITATIVE
  - REACTIVITY DECLINES WITH TIME

*reflex to*

Need both types of serologic tests to make syphilis diagnosis; Use of only one type of test is insufficient.
Syphilis serologic screening algorithms

**Traditional**

- **Quantitative RPR**
  - **RPR+**
    - **TP-PA**
      - **TP-PA+**
        - Syphilis (past or present)
      - **TP-PA-**
        - Syphilis unlikely
  - **RPR-**

**Reverse sequence**

- **EIA or CIA**
  - **EIA/CIA+**
  - **EIA/CIA-**
    - **Quantitative RPR**
      - **RPR+**
        - **TP-PA**
          - **TP-PA+**
            - Syphilis (past or present)
          - **TP-PA-**
            - Syphilis unlikely
      - **RPR-**
Diagnostic Challenges

False negatives
- Early primary and late latent stages
  - Serology may be negative in up to 25% of primary syphilis cases
- Prozone reaction (RPR/VDRL)

Biologic False Positives
- Non-trep test positive with confirmatory Treponemal test negative
- Viral illnesses including HIV, recent immunizations, autoimmune and chronic diseases

Discordant serology
- EIA or CIA + and RPR –

Use of Treponemal Immunoassays for Screening and Diagnosis of Syphilis

Guidance for Medical Providers and Laboratories in California

February 2016

CDPH has materials available online: std.ca.gov
Brief Clinical Overview of Congenital Syphilis
Early Congenital Syphilis (<age 2)

Common Presentations

- Asymptomatic presentations are common
  - ~2/3 infants born with CS are asymptomatic at birth – if untreated will develop symptoms

- Bone abnormalities

- Enlargement of liver +/- jaundice
  - Hepatomegaly present in almost all infants with CS

- Skin rash

- Nasal discharge (“snuffles”)

- Blood abnormalities

- Neurologic abnormalities

- Others
Syphilitic Rash

Photos courtesy of Public Health Image Library, CDC and Dr. Norman Cole.
Late Congenital Syphilis (>age 2)

Common Presentations

• Hearing loss (puberty – adulthood).
  – Can develop suddenly

• Interstitial keratitis (5 years old – adulthood)
  – Inflammation of tissue of cornea, can lead to vision loss

• Bone or tooth abnormalities

• Neurologic abnormalities

• Gummas (granulomatous inflammatory response to spirochetes) in the skin or mucous membranes

• Others
Interstitial Keratitis

Photos courtesy of Public Health Image Library, CDC/Susan Lindsley
Hutchinson’s Teeth

Permanent incisor teeth are narrow and notched.

Photos courtesy of Public Health Image Library, CDC/Susan Lindsley (left) and Robert Sumpter (Rt).
Perforation of hard palate

Photos courtesy of Public Health Image Library, CDC/Robert Sumpter
Clutton’s Joints

Saber Shins

Photos courtesy of Public Health Image Library, CDC/J. Pledger
Syphilis in Pregnancy and Congenital Syphilis
Screening Recommendations – CDC

• All pregnant women should be screened for syphilis at the first prenatal visit

• Women who are at high risk for syphilis, live in areas of high syphilis morbidity, or are previously untested should be screened again both:
  – Early in the third trimester (approx 28 weeks GA)
  – At delivery

Penicillin treatment of pregnant women with syphilis is highly effective at preventing CS
Women who would benefit from additional syphilis testing in the 3rd trimester and at delivery include those who:

- Have signs and symptoms of syphilis infection
- Live in areas with high rates of syphilis, particularly among females
- Were diagnosed with an STD during pregnancy
- Receive late or limited prenatal care
- Have partners that may have other partners, or partners with male partners
- Have history of incarceration
- Are involved with substance use or exchange sex for money, housing, or other resources

Routine risk assessment should be conducted throughout pregnancy to assess risk factors and inform the need for additional testing.
CDC Screening Recommendations

- No infant should leave the hospital without the maternal serologic status having been determined at least once during pregnancy, and again at delivery if at risk.
  - If mother presents at delivery with no prenatal care, STAT RPR should be performed
  - If baby has congenital syphilis and is asymptomatic, there is still an opportunity to treat the infant to prevent further morbidity
- Any woman who delivers a stillborn infant should be tested for syphilis
Treatment of Syphilis in Pregnancy

• The only treatment of syphilis in pregnancy is penicillin. There are no alternatives.
• Pregnant women should be treated with the penicillin regimen appropriate for their stage of infection.
  – Some experts recommend a 2nd dose of benzathine penicillin G be given a week after the initial dose in early syphilis
• Pregnant women with penicillin allergy should be desensitized and treated with penicillin.

All patients with syphilis should be tested for HIV.
Highest risk of treatment failure occurs during early syphilis

Table 3. Success of Maternal Treatment to Prevent Congenital Syphilis by Stage of Infection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Success/Total treated</th>
<th>Percentage (95% CI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>27/27</td>
<td>100 (87.2, 100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>71/75*</td>
<td>94.7 (86.9, 98.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early latent</td>
<td>100/102</td>
<td>98 (93.1, 99.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late latent</td>
<td>136/136</td>
<td>100 (97.3, 100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>334/340</td>
<td>98.2 (96.2, 99.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CI = confidence interval.
* P = .03 compared with other groups, χ².

Overall, maternal treatment is highly effective in the prevention of CS

Maternal treatment more likely to be successful when administered at earlier gestational age

Table 4. Success of Maternal Treatment in Preventing Congenital Syphilis by Gestational Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gestational age</th>
<th>Success/Total treated</th>
<th>Percentage (95% CI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤20 wk</td>
<td>152/153</td>
<td>99.4 (96.4, 100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21–25 wk</td>
<td>51/51</td>
<td>100 (93.0, 100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26–30 wk</td>
<td>58/59</td>
<td>98.3 (90.9, 100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31–35 wk</td>
<td>44/46</td>
<td>95.6 (85.2, 99.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36–40 wk</td>
<td>26/28</td>
<td>92.9 (76.5, 99.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41–42 wk</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>100 (29.2, 100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>334/340</td>
<td>98.2 (96.2, 99.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CI = confidence interval.
P = not significant, χ².

Syphilis in Pregnancy: Management

• When syphilis is diagnosed during the second half of pregnancy, management should include an obstetric ultrasound
  • If hepatomegaly, ascites, hydrops, fetal anemia, or thickened placenta- greater risk of fetal treatment failure

• Women treated during second half of pregnancy are at risk for premature labor and/or fetal distress as part of Jarisch-Herxheimer reaction
  • Counsel to seek medical attention if symptoms
  • Concern for this complication should not delay treatment
Syphilis in Pregnancy: Follow-up

- Titers at 28-32 weeks of gestation, delivery, and following recommendations for stage of disease
- Serologic titers can be checked monthly in high-risk women
- Clinical and serologic response should be appropriate for stage
  - Most women will deliver before serologic response to treatment can be assessed
What are common pathways that a women delivers a baby with CS?

**Woman acquires syphilis prior to pregnancy**
- Not diagnosed, not tested
- Not adequately treated
- SHE BECOMES PREGNANT

**She acquires syphilis during pregnancy**
- Not diagnosed
  - (late to prenatal care or no prenatal care, early screen negative and not repeated, seroconverted after birth)
- Not treated
  - (treatment not ordered, lost to follow up)
- Late to treatment
  - (treatment initiated <30 days prior to delivery)
- Inadequate treatment
  - (wrong drug or dose, lack or delay in 2nd or 3rd shots for late latent syphilis)

RARELY, among those diagnosed and treated:
- Maternal treatment failure
- Fetal demise
- Permanent fetal damage prior to treatment
What do we know about the cases? California Project Area CS Cases 2007-2015: Infant Characteristics (n=391)

- Stillbirth: 7%
- Signs of CS on exam: 11%
- Long bone abnormalities: 10%
- Reactive CSF VDRL: 9%
- Abnormal CSF: 32%
- Preterm birth: 30%
Percent of congenital syphilis cases, by maternal age at delivery: Majority of mothers were ages 20-29
Congenital Syphilis
Incidence Rates per 100,000 (L) and Number of Cases (R) by Race/Ethnicity of Mother, California, 2016

Incidence Rates

Number of Cases
When did mother initiate prenatal care? Over half of mothers initiated prenatal care only in 3rd trimester or not at all

- 1st trimester (n=75, 19.2%)
- 2nd trimester (n=57, 14.6%)
- 3rd trimester (n=63, 16.1%)
- No prenatal care (n=137, 35.0%)
- Unknown (n=14, 3.6%)
- Received prenatal care, outside CA (n=3, 0.8%)
- Received prenatal care, missing info (n=42, 10.7%)

Nationally, 74% initiate in 1st Trimester; only 6% in 3rd Trimester or not at all (CDC, 2011)
Syphilis screening at first prenatal care visit

Among 199 mothers with documented first prenatal visit:

Reasons for delay:
- Provider error
- Lab off-site
- Patient lost to follow-up and labs never drawn
- Surveillance data incomplete

Tested within 7 days of first visit, n=119, 60%

Delayed or not tested, n=80, 40%

Credits: Stoltey, Ng
Maternal risk characteristics for interviewed early syphilis cases (n=92)

70% (92 of 132) interviewed

Risk in 12 months prior to diagnosis

- Methamphetamine use: 44% (n=20), 22% (n=10)
- Exchange of sex for money, drugs: 13% (n=6), 6.5% (n=3)
- Jail, juvenile hall, prison: 13% (n=6)
Public Health Response: Points of Intervention to Prevent CS

**Pre-pregnancy**
- Screening/dx/tx
- Timely partner services
- Accessible highly effective contraception

**During pregnancy**
- Linkage to prenatal care
- Screening/dx
- **Timely** treatment appropriate for stage
- **Timely** partner services
- Case management
- Prevent and detect new infection

**Birth**
- Evaluation and treatment of baby
Protect Yourself and Your Baby from Syphilis

What is Congenital Syphilis?
Syphilis is a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Congenital syphilis occurs when a pregnant woman with syphilis passes the infection to her unborn child. This can cause serious problems like premature birth, low birth weight, birth defects and stillbirth.

What are Symptoms of Syphilis?
Most people with syphilis have symptoms such as a sore or rash. Even if they do, they may not notice them. The only way to know for sure is to get tested!

Getting tested for syphilis is part of routine prenatal care.

Who Should Get Tested?
If you are pregnant or might get pregnant, it is important to get routine prenatal care.

Getting tested for syphilis and other STDs is part of routine prenatal care. Pregnant women should get syphilis testing at the first prenatal visit.

For a complete list of free or low-cost clinics near you, visit https://gettested.cdc.gov/ or call Public Health at xxx-xxxx-xxxx.

County Public Health Logo here

If you would like to customize and distribute within your LHJ, contact Ashley Dockter at ashley.dockter@cdph.ca.gov

Get Yourself Tested!
You can get syphilis and other STDs more than once.

If you need to get tested or would like more information on protecting yourself and your baby, talk to your health care provider, or visit a local clinic.

These clinics offer FREE or LOW-COST STD testing and treatment and pregnancy planning services.

Clinic Name 1
Street Address
City
Phone: 111-111-1111
Clinic hours (M-F, 10-6)

Clinic Name 2
Street Address
City
Phone: 222-222-2222
Clinic hours (M-F, 10-6)

Clinic Name 3
Street Address
City
Phone: 333-333-3333
Clinic hours (M-F, 10-6)

Clinic Name 4
Street Address
City
Phone: 444-444-4444
Clinic hours (M-F, 10-6)

Clinic Name 5
Street Address
City
Phone: 555-555-5555
Clinic hours (M-F, 10-6)

Clinic Name 6
Street Address
City
Phone: 666-666-6666
Clinic hours (M-F, 10-6)

For a list of free or low-cost clinics near you, go to https://gettested.cdc.gov/ or call Public Health at xxx-xxxx-xxxx.

The clinics listed on the front of this brochure offer FREE or LOW-COST STD testing and treatment and pregnancy planning services.

How is Syphilis Treated?
Syphilis can be cured, even during pregnancy. Proper treatment will help prevent your baby from becoming infected.

Be sure to inform your sex partner(s) because they will need to be tested and treated too. This will help them stay healthy, avoid infecting others and avoid reinfecting you.
**Update for Health Care Providers**

**Concerning Increases in Syphilis in Women and Congenital Syphilis: An Update for California Health Care Providers**

**The Problem: Increasing Congenital Syphilis in California**

California has seen an increase in congenital syphilis among women over the past two years. This has been accompanied by a tripling of congenital syphilis cases from 2012 to 2014. In 2014, most female early syphilis cases and congenital syphilis cases in California were reported from the Central Valley and Los Angeles County. Most women who gave birth to babies with congenital syphilis received prenatal care late in pregnancy or not at all. This increase in numbers of congenital syphilis cases in California is an important public health problem requiring immediate attention from medical providers caring for pregnant women and women of reproductive age.

**What is Congenital Syphilis?**

Congenital syphilis occurs when syphilis is transmitted from an infected mother to her fetus during pregnancy. It is a potentially devastating disease that can cause severe illness in babies including premature birth, low birth weight, birth defects, blindness and hearing loss. It can also lead to stillbirth and infant death.

**Congenital Syphilis Can Be Prevented!**

Congenital syphilis can be prevented with early detection and timely and effective treatment of syphilis in pregnant women and women who could become pregnant. Preconception and interconception care should include screening for HIV and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including syphilis, in women at risk in addition to access to highly effective contraception.

**Prenatal Screening: It’s the Law!**

All pregnant women should receive routine prenatal care which includes syphilis testing. In California, it is required by law that pregnant women get tested for syphilis at their first prenatal visit.

Syphilis testing should be repeated during the third trimester (28-32 weeks gestational age) and at delivery in women who are at high risk for syphilis or live in areas with high rates of syphilis, particularly among females. Routine risk assessment should be conducted throughout pregnancy to assess the risk factors highlighted in the box on page 2; this should inform the need for additional testing.

Infants should not be discharged from the hospital unless the syphilis serologic status of the mother has been determined at least once during pregnancy and, for at risk women, again at delivery.

**Women Who Would Benefit from Additional Syphilis Testing in the Third Trimester (28-32 Weeks) and at Delivery Include Those Who:**

- Have signs and symptoms of syphilis infection.
- Live in areas with high rates of syphilis, particularly among females.
- Receive late or limited prenatal care.
- Did not get tested in the first or second trimester.
- Have partners that may have other partners, or partners with male partners.
- Are involved in substance use or exchange sex for money, housing, or other resources.

**Common Mistakes**

- Not reporting syphilis cases to local health departments within 24 hours.
- Not strictly adhering to treatment guidelines for pregnant women with syphilis.
- Not properly conducting routine risk assessment throughout pregnancy to determine need for additional testing.

**Diagnosing Syphilis**

Syphilis is diagnosed by reviewing patient history, taking a sexual risk assessment, physical exam, and blood tests. The diagnosis of syphilis requires interpretation of both treponemal and non-treponemal serology tests results. Guidance on interpreting syphilis test results, refer to the CDPH screening and diagnostic guide listed in the resources for health care providers section.

**PHILS’ Treatment**

Treatment for a pregnant woman is based on the stage of her infection. To prevent adverse pregnancy outcomes, physicians should treat patients as soon as possible. Treating a pregnant woman infected with syphilis also treats her.

**SOURCES FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS**

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: http://www.cdc.gov/std/syphilis
- California Department of Public Health (CDPH): http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/std


Health Alert

Ongoing Increase in Syphilis in Women Calls for Testing All Pregnant Women in the First & Third Trimester, and at Delivery

Situation: San Joaquin County is experiencing an increase in heterosexual transmission of syphilis, syphilis in women, and congenital syphilis. In 2015, 57% of syphilis was transmitted through heterosexual contact. Syphilis in women has increased dramatically and now accounts for 29% of all reported syphilis in the county. Six babies were reported with congenital syphilis in 2015 compared to two babies diagnosed with congenital syphilis in 2014. See Figure below.

The Health Officer is designating San Joaquin County as an area with high syphilis morbidity.

Such a designation calls for all clinicians to follow best practices and guidelines as established by the CDPH, CDC.
Efforts are needed:

☑ to create new tools;
☑ to detect and treat syphilis;
☑ increase testing;
☑ control the further spread of syphilis; and
☑ improve electronic medical records in order to improve patient outcomes.

https://www.cdc.gov/std/syphilis/resources.htm
Take-Home Points: Congenital Syphilis in California

- Female syphilis and congenital syphilis cases are increasing in California.
- Most congenital syphilis cases can and should be prevented.
- Test all pregnant women for syphilis.
- Treat syphilis as soon as possible – contact health department if challenges obtaining penicillin G.
- Report to local health department within 24 hours.
- Ensure partners are treated to prevent reinfection. Local health departments are collaborators in the prevention of CS, and can assist.
- Confirm syphilis testing at delivery.
Hepatitis C

• Rates of hepatitis C are increasing among women of childbearing age in California
• Test pregnant women for hepatitis C if at risk
  – HIV+; ever injected drugs, even once many years ago
• Vertical transmission risk of HCV: 5% HCV+; 15-20% if HIV+/HCV+
• Currently no prophylaxis to prevent MTCT
  – Treat BEFORE pregnancy; HCV treatment not currently recommended during pregnancy
• “Perinatal hepatitis C” (hepatitis C in an infant ages 2-36 months) reportable to public health as of January 2018
• Curative HCV direct-acting antiviral treatments FDA approved for persons 12 years of age and older

Sources: Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine Consult Series #43, Hepatitis C in pregnancy: Screening, treatment, and management.; AASLD/IDSA www.hcvguidelines.org
Clinical Guidelines and Consultation

STD Clinical Consultation Network
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