

Syphilis Screen

Syphilis is an infection caused by the bacteria *Treponema pallidum* and is most often spread by sexual contact. Syphilis testing screens for the presence of antibodies that combat the bacteria.

How is the test performed?

An initial blood test is performed to look for antibodies the body produces to fight the infection. If antibodies are found, a second test, called a reflex test, is performed to confirm the antibodies specifically target the syphilis bacteria to rule out the possibility of a false positive.

What are symptoms of syphilis?

Syphilis symptoms are divided into four stages; primary, secondary, latent and late syphilis.

Primary - During the primary stage, you may notice a single sore at the location where the syphilis entered your body. It is usually firm, round and painless and can easily go unnoticed. It lasts 3-6 weeks and heals whether you receive treatment or not, but you still need treatment or it will move into the secondary stage.

Secondary - In the secondary stage, you may have skin rashes and/or sores in your mouth, vagina (for women), or anus. This stage usually starts with a rash on one or more areas of your body and can look like rough, red or reddish-brown spots on the palms of your hands or bottoms of your feet. You may also experience fever, swollen lymph glands, sore throat, patchy hair loss, headaches, weight loss, muscle aches and fatigue. Like the primary stage, this symptoms will go away without treatment, but it will move into the latent stage without treatment.

Latent - The latent stage begins when symptoms disappear from the primary and secondary stages. Without treatment, you can continue to have syphilis in your body for years without any signs or symptoms.

Late syphilis - Most untreated people do not develop late syphilis, but it can be very serious and occurs 10-30 years after the infection began. Symptoms of late syphilis can include difficulty coordinating muscle movements, paralysis, numbness, blindness and dementia. Late stages of syphilis can damage organs and lead to death.

Is syphilis curable?

Syphilis can be cured when treated with a course of antibiotics.

What should I do if my results are positive or negative?

It is always recommended you meet with a healthcare provider to determine what your laboratory test results mean to you. Your healthcare provider will review all of your test results and, combined with your health history, will be able to provide an accurate picture of your health status.

If your results were positive: Since the syphilis test requires a reflex test for confirmation, a positive result confirms you are infected with syphilis.

If your results were negative: Negative results mean it is unlikely an infection is present, but it may take several weeks after exposure to the bacteria for antibodies to appear. Your healthcare provider may request additional testing.

What other resources are available to learn more about my health and laboratory tests?

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov
- Lab Tests Online: labtestsonline.org
- WebMD: webmd.com

DLO Direct offers direct access to laboratory testing for informational purposes. A DLO Direct lab test result is not a medical diagnosis and is not intended as medical advice. Only a healthcare provider can interpret lab results and diagnose a medical condition or disease.

Because tests have not been ordered by a healthcare provider, third party entities, including Medicare and Medicaid, will not reimburse for these tests.



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Chlamydia Testing

This test is looking for evidence of infection by the bacterium *Chlamydia trachomatis*. Chlamydia is the most common bacterial sexually transmitted disease (STD) in the United States and can infect both men and women. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 2.8 million Americans are infected with chlamydia each year.

What are the symptoms of chlamydia?

About 75% of infected women and 50% of infected men have no symptoms of chlamydia, so routine screening is recommended for sexually active individuals. If symptoms do exist, they may present as one or more of the following in women:

- Increased vaginal discharge
- Vaginal bleeding between periods

Symptoms in men may include:

- Penile discharge
- Burning sensation during urination
- Painful, swollen testicles

Is chlamydia treatable?

Chlamydia can be treated with a course of antibiotics.

What happens if I don't get treatment?

Untreated chlamydia can lead to the following in women:

- Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)
- Potential for tubal (ectopic) pregnancy
- Infertility
- Rectal itching
- Red, swollen and itchy eyes

If left untreated in men, it can lead to:

- Rectal itching
- Red, swollen and itchy eyes
- Infertility

What should I do if my results are positive or negative?

It is always recommended you meet with a healthcare provider to determine what your laboratory test results mean to you. Your healthcare provider will review all of your test results and, combined with your health history, will be able to provide an accurate picture of your health status.

If your results were positive: You should share your results with your healthcare provider to discuss treatment options and/or further testing.

If your results were negative: A negative test means only that there is no evidence of disease at the time of the test. The most reliable ways to avoid infection with chlamydia or any sexually transmitted disease are to abstain from oral, vaginal, and anal sex or to be in a long-term, mutually monogamous relationship with an uninfected partner. People who are sexually active should correctly and consistently use condoms to reduce the risk of infection with chlamydia and other STDs.

What other resources are available to learn more about my health and laboratory tests?

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)
- Lab Tests Online: [labtestsonline.org](https://www.labtestsonline.org)
- WebMD: [webmd.com](https://www.webmd.com)