



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health

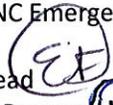
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PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT

To: Local Health Directors, Private Physicians, Hospital Administrators, NC OB/GYN Providers, Ryan White Care Providers, Substance Abuse Agencies, Laboratory Directors, State and County Correctional Nursing Administrators, NC Infectious Disease Providers and NC Emergency Departments

From: Evelyn Foust, MPH, Communicable Disease Branch Head 
Victoria Mobley, MD MPH, Medical Director HIV/STD Program 

Re: Increase in Early Syphilis Infections Statewide

Syphilis cases have been steadily rising across North Carolina. From January 1- July 31, 2014, there were 483 new reported cases of early syphilis, compared to 371 cases for the same time period in 2013 and 341 in 2012. Two hundred and ninety-seven of the 483 new early syphilis cases were diagnosed in the primary or secondary stage of the disease. We are asking all medical providers to take a more proactive approach to diagnosing and treating syphilis in order to reverse the current trends. Please consider the following management guidelines and reporting laws:

1. When evaluating a patient with a suspected case of syphilis or other STD, complete a full history and physical exam to assess for signs and symptoms, including oral and anal exams.
2. Report all early syphilis cases to the County Health Department within 24 hours of diagnosis.
3. Proactively treat all cases and/or sexual partners if symptoms or syphilis are present and DO NOT wait for confirmatory testing.
 - a. First-line treatment of primary, secondary and early latent syphilis infections is with a one-time dose of 2.4 million units of penicillin G benzathine (Bicillin L-A) for non-allergic patients.
 - b. Penicillin allergic, non-pregnant, patients can be treated with doxycycline 100 mg orally twice daily for 14 days.
 - c. *Pregnant women who are penicillin allergic should be desensitized and treated with penicillin.*
4. If you do not have Bicillin readily available in your practice, you can refer the patient to your local health department for necessary treatment.
5. **Given shared transmission risk factors, an increase in syphilis morbidity likely indicates a similar increase in HIV and other STIs. Therefore when you test for syphilis, also test for HIV and other STIs such as gonorrhea and chlamydia.**
6. Visit our website <http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/cd/> for up-to-date STD and other public health information.
7. Take advantage of your local Public Health Services:
 - Providers can get assistance with syphilis diagnosis, management and partner notification by contacting your local health department.

Your timely and accurate reporting can help to **eliminate syphilis in North Carolina.**

www.ncdhhs.gov • <http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/cd/>
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