

Syphilis in pregnancy

Syphilis is a sexually transmissible infection (STI) which has been increasing in Western Australia.

A pregnant person who has syphilis can pass the infection to their unborn baby via the placenta. This is called congenital syphilis and it can make babies very sick. Congenital syphilis in babies may lead to disability such as blindness, deafness and developmental delay. It may also result in miscarriage or stillbirth.

To help stop congenital syphilis, testing is recommended at least 3 times during pregnancy. Healthcare workers should do a syphilis blood test at your:

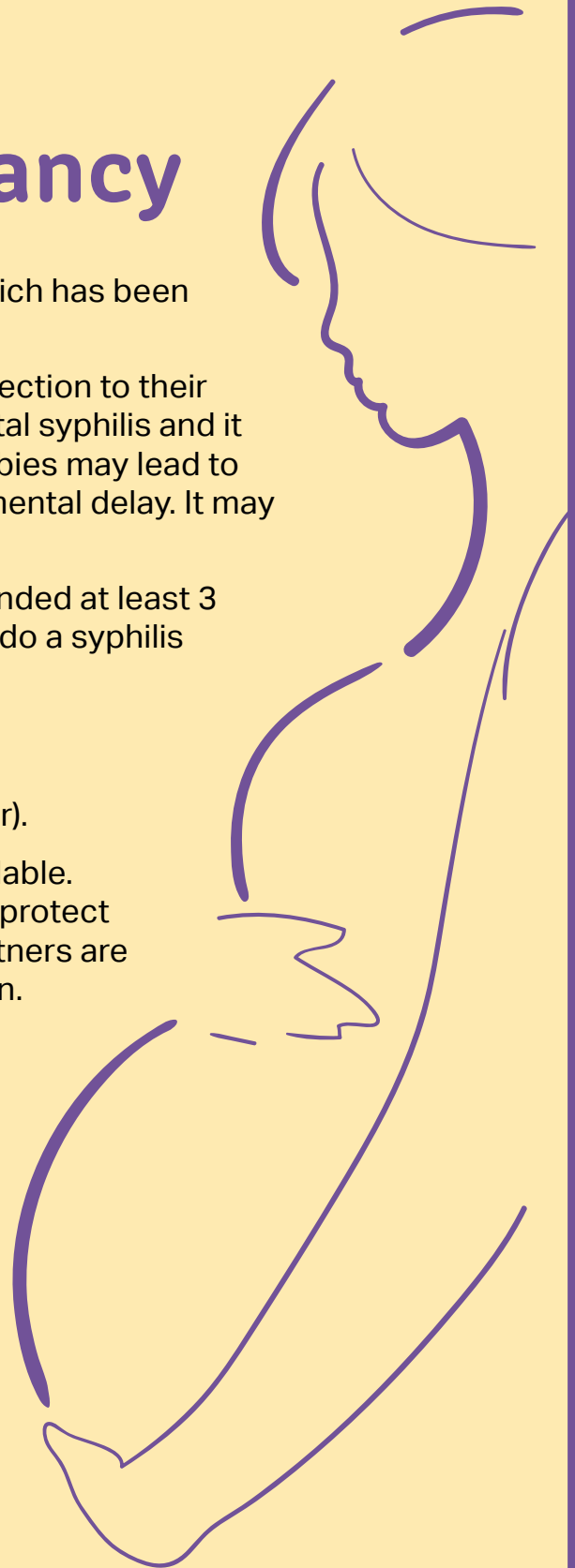
- first antenatal appointment,
- 28 week antenatal appointment, and
- 36 week antenatal appointment (or at birth, if earlier).

If the test shows you have syphilis, treatment is available. Getting tested and treated early in pregnancy helps protect you and your baby. It is important all your sexual partners are tested and treated too so you don't get syphilis again.

It's important to protect yourself, baby and sexual partners from getting syphilis and other STIs by:

- using condoms for all kinds of sex, including oral, vaginal and anal sex
- having sex with one partner who has sex only with you
- asking for an STI test if you have had sex without a condom or have changed sexual partners during your pregnancy
- seeing a healthcare worker as soon as you notice any symptoms, such as a genital ulcer.

If you are not offered a syphilis blood test or you are not sure if you have been tested, ask your healthcare worker.



Find out more

