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Genito Urinary Medicine (GUM) Clinics

GUM clinics are happy to provide information and advice on STIs such as syphilis as well as providing check-ups and treatment. Please telephone to make an appointment.

The clinics are completely confidential and will not inform your GP of results unless you ask for this to happen. You can attend one of these clinics at any age (even if you are under the age of sexual consent which is 17 in Northern Ireland).

The telephone numbers of the GUM clinics are listed below.

Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast.

Tel: **028 9063 4050**

Altnagelvin Hospital, Londonderry.

Tel: **028 7161 1269**

Causeway Hospital, Coleraine.

Tel: **028 7034 6028**

Daisy Hill Hospital, Newry.

Tel: **028 3083 5050**

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Produced by the Health Promotion Agency
for Northern Ireland, Tel: 028 9021 1811
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Syphilis

What is syphilis?

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) which is caught through intimate contact with someone who is infected. Intimate contact includes kissing or unprotected vaginal, oral or anal sex or genital contact. Syphilis can also be passed from a mother to her unborn baby.

What are the symptoms?

Half of the people infected with syphilis show no symptoms at all so if you feel you may have been at risk it's best to have a check-up.

In cases where there are symptoms the illness usually begins with the appearance of one or more painless but highly infectious sores. These sores can appear anywhere on the body but usually they are at the site of infection. These sores usually clear up on their own, in two to six weeks.

More symptoms may develop from six weeks to six months after the sores. These symptoms vary, but may include a rash on the hands or feet. Again these symptoms tend to clear up on their own.

Syphilis then shows no obvious signs, but if left untreated over a period of years, it can lead to serious health problems including damage to the heart, brain and nervous system.

How is syphilis diagnosed and treated?

• Syphilis is easy to diagnose and treat. Your local Genito Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinic can do this and can also contact, test and treat current and recent sexual partners. Details of these clinics can be found on the other side of this leaflet.

• All stages of syphilis can be treated with antibiotics.
• If you think you may have syphilis, you should also be tested for other sexually transmitted infections which may be present without symptoms.

How can you protect yourself against syphilis?

• If you are sexually active and uncertain of your partner's sexual history, you can reduce your risk of syphilis and other STIs by using condoms correctly and consistently during sexual intercourse or oral sex.