

Long  
time no  
syphilis

Yorkshire  
MESMAC



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# Preventing and controlling Syphilis

Testing, prevention and partner notification

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# A quick recap

- Penicillin was found to treat Syphilis in 1943
  - The Tuskegee Study continued until 1972, studying untreated Syphilis in Black men
  - Syphilis has been on the rise since the early 2000s
  - There's a lot we can learn about Syphilis from what is missing in the history of Syphilis!
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# Controlling vs preventing syphilis

Prevention = measures applied to prevent the occurrence of Syphilis in a person

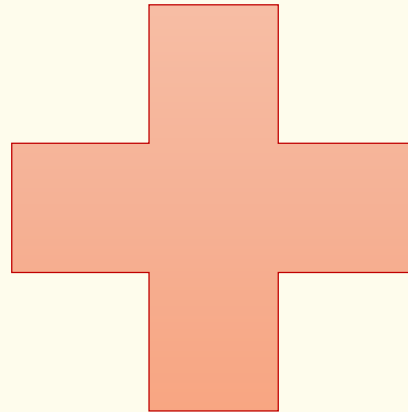
Control = measures applied to prevent transmission once Syphilis has occurred



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# Controlling AND preventing syphilis

- Preventing:
  - Condoms
  - Education and knowledge
  - Talking (busting stigma)



- Controlling:
  - Testing
  - Treating
  - Talking (partner notification)



# Testing- what's best?



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- BASHH guidelines suggest **all** patients should receive Syphilis testing
  - Testing for Syphilis most often involves taking blood samples
  - Bloods will test for the bacteria which causes Syphilis (Treponema Pallidum)
  - Bloods will also determine how long the person has been infected (at which stage the person is at)
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# POCT- testing for antibodies

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- Insti – test for HIV and Syphilis, effective at 3-12 weeks
- Bio-line- tests for just Syphilis, effective at 4-6 weeks
- What else do you use?

Syphilis reactive will always come back if a person has had Syphilis previously

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# Swabbing the chancre

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- Microscopy tests may be offered
  - Often a rare test as it relies on seeing/accessing the chancre
  - Relies on the Dr assessing to suggest Syphilis testing
  - Unlikely to happen in a sexual health setting
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## Common Questions

How is it used?	+
When is it requested?	-
A doctor may request the test:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If you have symptoms, such as a chancre (ulcer or sore) on the genitals or throat;</li><li>• If you are being treated for another <a href="#">sexually transmitted disease</a>, such as <a href="#">gonorrhoea</a>;</li><li>• If you are <a href="#">pregnant</a>, because untreated syphilis can infect and even kill a developing fetus; or</li><li>• If you complain of non-specific symptoms that resemble those of syphilis, to determine the exact cause of your illness.</li><li>• If your partner has been diagnosed with syphilis.</li></ul>	
What does the test result mean?	+
Is there anything else I should know?	+
What are the symptoms of syphilis?	+



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# Pregnant people and testing

- Every pregnant person registered with the NHS is offered a syphilis test
  - The test is carried out before the 3 month mark (first trimester)
  - Routine syphilis tests are then no longer offered as routine to pregnant people
  - Meaning those engaging in sex throughout their pregnancy may continue to be at risk
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# Partner notification- why do we need it?

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- Reduces onward transmissions
  - Controls spread
  - Encourages conversations around sex (hopefully healthy ones!)
  - SHS have the ability to anonymously inform sexual partners of potential contact with STIs etc.
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# Partner notification- issues

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- As VCSO SH services, we don't have the power to offer PN
  - What potential issues may PN as it stands have?
  - What can we do to improve likelihood/chances of PN going forward?
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# Talking to people about Syphilis

- Breakout group one: discuss how you may bring up the offer of a Syphilis test for someone who is reluctant to test, despite them being an 'at risk' group
  - Breakout group two: discuss how support someone who has been told they've been in contact with Syphilis
  - Breakout group three: discuss Syphilis symptoms and treatment with someone who has tested positive and is nervous
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# Q&A time





# Homework!

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- Research what POCT syph testing is available in your area (if not already an option)
  - Can you work with your local SHS to be part of national Syph testing programme?
  - Can you come up with an action plan on how to implement Syphilis education in your region/service/SU groups
  - We will be discussing this in the final session (in 2 weeks)
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# Next time...

- Targeting populations
- Campaigns (a bit more history!)
- Language

