



“Improving Public Health in Our Community Through Cooperation”

**Alachua County
Health Department**
(352) 334-7900

To report a disease,
phone or fax the
appropriate office below:

Administrator
Paul Myers, MS
(352) 334-8892

Environmental Health
Director Anthony Dennis
(352) 334-7931

HIV/AIDS
Richard Willis, Surveillance
(352) 334-7968
Fax (352) 334-8867

Martha Buffington, Ryan White
(352) 334-7967

Epidemiology/Hepatitis
Nadia Kovacevich, MPH, CPH
(352) 225-4181
Fax (352) 955-6464
If you would like to receive the
Epi InvestiGator by email or fax,
please contact us at the following
email address:
Nadia.Kovacevich@flhealth.gov,
or phone: (352) 225-4181

Immunizations
Michael Smith, RN
(352) 334-8827
Fax: (352) 334-7943

Sexually Transmitted Disease
Larissa Cantlin-Plemons
(352) 334-7900 ext 3434
Fax: (352) 334-8818

Tuberculosis
Geneva Saulsberry, RN, BSN
(352) 225-4188
Fax(352) 955-6464

After Hours:
(352) 334-7900

Editor
Sheila Griffis



Syphilis

Submitted By: Gay Koehler-Sides,
Human Services Program Manager and
Larissa Cantlin-Plemons,
STD Program Manager

Syphilis Increases

Over the last few years, we have seen a resurgence of syphilis in the United States. We are experiencing national sustained increases in infectious syphilis morbidity rates and in recent months, our community has felt this rise in incidence. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), national syphilis rates have risen almost every year, since 2001 and in 2014, they were the highest they have been in 20 years. We are seeing a shift in syphilis to a largely heterosexual population. The CDC states that there has been a 37% increase in congenital syphilis from 2012 to 2014.

Syphilis requires a nontreponemal and treponemal test. Discordant results do not indicate an infection. The Florida Department of Health in Alachua County tests using a Rapid Plasma Reagin (RPR) with confirmatory if the RPR is reactive. Syphilis is a reportable disease and once the health department has received positive or possible positive results, disease intervention is started. The Florida Department of Health Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) assist with disease notification, education, treatment verification, and partner elicitation and notification. You are vital to combating infectious syphilis. If you suspect your patient may have syphilis or may have been exposed to syphilis, please test and treat. Expedited treatment will lessen the severity of disease and prevent exposure to sex partners.

Syphilis Testing in Pregnant Women

With increasing congenital syphilis, testing is imperative during pregnancy. The CDC recommends testing for syphilis during the first prenatal visit and during the third trimester and delivery for high risk mothers (and in areas with increased incidence). Untreated syphilis in pregnancy may result in still birth, miscarriage, or infant death. According to the CDC this has happened up to 40% of the time. Pregnant women with syphilis should be treated immediately. Treatment is needed at least 30 days prior to the date of delivery to prevent congenital syphilis.

The only CDC recommended treatment for syphilis in pregnancy is Benzathine Penicilin G (Bicillin-LA). If patient is allergic to penicillin, desensitization is advised.

The Florida Department of Health in Alachua County is open Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm: appointments are 8:00 am through 3:30 pm and STD/HIV test results are given 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call 352-334-7900 X 3434 or e-mail Larissa.Cantlin-Plemons@flhealth.gov
For additional information regarding syphilis and the 2015 treatment guidelines, please refer to <http://www.cdc.gov/std/syphilis/default.htm>.

Syphilis

Submitted By: Gay Koehler-Sides,
Human Services Program Manager and
Larissa Cantlin-Plemons,
STD Program Manager
Alachua County Health Department

What is syphilis?

Syphilis is a **treatable** bacterial infection

Signs + Symptoms

(Often has no symptoms)

Painless bump/lesion

Body rash

Rash on palms of the hands and/or
bottoms of feet

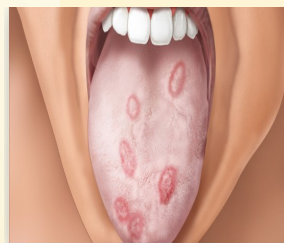
Hair loss

During pregnancy:

Miscarriage

Stillbirth

Death shortly after birth



Who's at risk?

ANYONE sexually active,
(oral, anal, vaginal, digital)

ANYONE needle sharing,
(drugs or tattoos)

Babies of infected mother

The Facts

In 2014 there were 20,000 cases
in the U.S. and growing.

Unlike other STDs, syphilis moves
throughout the body within hours.

Up to 40% of babies born to women with
untreated syphilis may be stillborn,
or die from the infection as a newborn.

1/3 of people who have sex one time with
someone with primary or secondary stage
syphilis will acquire syphilis.

Where to get tested or treated?

Contact your local health provider or the



Alachua County
Health Department
Main Site
224 SE 24th Street
Gainesville, FL 32641
8am - 4pm, M-F
(352) 334-7900

For other Alachua County Health
Department locations call (352) 334-7900
or visit Alachua.FloridaHealth.gov

Treatment for Syphilis

Penicillin G, administered parenterally, is the preferred drug for treating persons in all stages of syphilis. Selection of the appropriate penicillin preparation is important, because *T. pallidum* can reside in sequestered sites (e.g., the CNS and aqueous humor) that are poorly accessed by some forms of penicillin. Reports have indicated that practitioners have inadvertently prescribed combination benzathine-procaine penicillin (Bicillin C-R) instead of the standard benzathine penicillin product (Bicillin L-A) widely used in the United States. Practitioners, pharmacists, and purchasing agents should be aware of the similar names of these two products to avoid using the inappropriate combination therapy agent for treating syphilis. It is also important to know if any patient has a penicillin allergy to avoid urticaria, angioedema, or anaphylaxis (i.e., upper airway obstruction, bronchospasm, or hypotension) and even death.



| Stage of Syphilis | Treatment Recommendations |
|---|---|
| Primary and Secondary Syphilis | Benzathine penicillin G 2.4 million units IM in a single dose |
| <i>Tertiary Syphilis with Normal CSF Examination</i> | Benzathine penicillin G 7.2 million units total, administered as 3 doses of 2.4 million units IM each at 1-week intervals |
| Early Latent Syphilis Adults* | Benzathine penicillin G 2.4 million units IM in a single dose |
| Late Latent Syphilis or Latent Syphilis of Unknown Duration Adults* | Benzathine penicillin G 7.2 million units total administered as 3 doses of 2.4 million units IM each at 1-week intervals |
| Primary and Secondary Syphilis among Persons with HIV Infection | Benzathine penicillin G, 2.4 million units IM in a single dose |
| Early Latent Syphilis Children* | Benzathine penicillin G 50,000 units/kg IM, up to the adult dose of 2.4 million units in a single dose |
| Late Latent Syphilis Children * | Benzathine penicillin G 50,000 units/kg IM, up to the adult dose of 2.4 million units, administered as 3 doses at 1-week intervals (total 150,000 units/kg up to the adult total dose of 7.2 million units) |

Information directly excerpted from the following references:

<http://www.cdc.gov/std/syphilis/treatment.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/std/syphilis/syphilis-factsheet-july-2014.pdf>



Zika Testing in Pregnant Women

Providers should use their clinical judgment, informed by DOH and CDC guidance, to obtain Zika testing for their pregnant patients through commercial laboratories without approval by the county health department. Pregnant women who meet the criteria for testing but who are **uninsured, underinsured, or otherwise cannot obtain testing through a commercial laboratory should be directed to a county health department for testing.** Pregnant woman who do not meet the DOH and CDC criteria for testing but desire testing nonetheless, should be counseled on the risks and benefits of testing (e.g., false positives and false negatives) and be directed to the county health department for testing. Please contact 352-225-4181 for more information.

Additional Healthcare Resources:

<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/hc-providers/index.html>

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/zika-virus/index.html>

Latest DOH News Updates: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/newsroom/index.html>