
"Partnering to promote, protect and preserve health in our community."

HEALTH ALERT NETWORK HEALTH DISTRICT 4

SYPHILIS ALERT FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

Central District Health Department (CDHD) Recommends Providers Screen for Syphilis

February 16, 2016

Summary

Syphilis continues to be a concern in our communities. In 2015 and 2016, 70 primary and secondary cases related to this latest outbreak were reported to CDHD and Southwest District Health. Men who have sex with men (MSM) have been the highest risk group, although methamphetamine or other drug use and incarceration in the past year have been risk factors among recent male and female cases.

Testing

Please consider syphilis if a patient presents with:

- Any ano/genital or oral lesion, especially indurated and minimally painful ulcers
- Any unexplained rash, especially with palmar or plantar involvement
- Unexplained lymphadenopathy

Testing for syphilis should include both screening (e.g., RPR or VDRL with titer) and confirmatory serologies (e.g., TPPA, FTA-Abs, or MHA-TP).

Treatment and Prevention

In order to stop the spread of disease, seize every treatment opportunity. Consider presumptive treatment if a patient is symptomatic, is a contact to a syphilis case, belongs to a high-risk group, or if follow-up is uncertain. Use single dose benzathine penicillin G (e.g., Bicillin-LA), 2.4 million units IM as first-line therapy.

Considerations for Pregnant Women

Providers should continue to screen all women serologically for syphilis early in pregnancy, preferably at the first pregnancy-related visit. Women at higher risk for syphilis infection including those with multiple sexual partners, those diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection, or those with sexual partners diagnosed with syphilis

should have additional serologic testing performed twice during the third trimester: once at 28-32 weeks' gestation and again at delivery.

Any woman who has a fetal death after 20 weeks gestation should be tested for syphilis, even if screening was performed early in pregnancy.

Additional Resources

The 2015 CDC STD Treatment Guidelines: <http://www.cdc.gov/std/tg2015/default.htm>

California STD/HIV Prevention Center "A Clinician's Guide to Sexual History Taking": <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/pubsforms/Guidelines/Documents/CA-STD-Clinician-Guide-Sexual-History-Taking.pdf>

To report syphilis or for more information call the CDHD Communicable Disease Program at 208-327-8625.

#

XXXXX FEBRUARY 2016