

Fact Sheet – for patients and families

SA Syphilis Register

The story

- > An outbreak of syphilis was declared within some Aboriginal communities in 2011 and is now in four Australian states. In South Australia, an outbreak was declared in March 2017. The outbreak reached Adelaide in December 2018.
- > Syphilis is a sexually transmissible infection (STI) that can make you sick if it is not treated.
- > You can catch syphilis through unprotected sex with a person who has syphilis and is in the first two stages of infection.
- > Syphilis can harm your baby before it is born.
- > A register list has been created to record information and help treat people with syphilis.

Information collected for the register:

- > Your name, date of birth and where you live
- > The date you first got syphilis
- > What stage of syphilis you have:
 - Primary – Up to 3 months since infected. You are infectious at this stage.
 - Secondary – 6 months onwards since infected. You are infectious at this stage.
 - Latent – 2 years or more untreated or ineffectively treated. You can be infectious at this stage, and it is also very damaging to internal organs and body systems.
- > Any syphilis treatment you've had
- > When and where you see the doctor about syphilis
- > Any blood tests you have had for syphilis
- > What treatment you have had or are having
- > Any treatment you might need now.

How confidential is the register?

- > The register is only accessed by certain health department staff.
- > The health department staff who have access are bound by strict confidentiality laws and practices.
- > Other health services do not have direct access to the register.
- > Information can only be given to recognised health care providers and professionals.

What is the register used for?

- > To offer health care professionals advice about your blood test results so they can decide what stage of syphilis you have and the right treatment and management you need.
- > To track and treat syphilis so it doesn't spread in your community.
- > To provide accurate information and assistance for partner notification.

What is partner notification?

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection, so when you are diagnosed with syphilis it is important to find people you have had sex with to get them tested and treated to stop the spread to other people. Your doctor, nurse or health department staff will ask you about your sexual contacts over a period of time, sometimes up to a year. You will be asked to provide as much information as you can to help locate the person, like their name, phone number and address, or where they were travelling to or from. You might not have all this information but it's important to give what you do have. You will also be asked when you last had sex with these people and maybe even what kind of sex you had.

All this information will be kept confidential and will only be used to make sure your contacts have the testing and treatment they might need to make them well again. The people you name are then contacted by one of the health professionals.

Your information is confidential so the people who are contacted will not be given your name by the health professional.

For more information

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