

Syphilis

While nowhere near as common as it was, Syphilis still remains one of the most serious of all the transmittable sexual infections.

Over many years Syphilis has claimed many lives and while now fairly uncommon, it is on the increase both in this country and abroad.

Syphilis is a bacterial infection which responds well to treatment with antibiotic medication. However, if left undiagnosed it has the ability to prove fatal. It usually follows three distinct stages.

The infection usually takes between 2 to 6 weeks to incubate after the bacterium have entered the body and the first sign is usually a hard painless ulcer which appears on the penis or the female genitalia. This is called a *chancre*. Sometimes the chancre appears on the mouth or the fingers, and left untreated it will disappear of its own accord, leaving the sufferer with the impression that the problem has cured itself.

The secondary stage manifests itself as a fever and a rash, and again this will disappear if left untreated. Sometimes this secondary stage can be more serious affecting the eyes, lining of the brain or the joints, but as we said, if left untreated it will eventually disappear, and again the sufferer may well think that the problem has cured itself.

The bacteria will then lay dormant in the body, often for many years, causing no ill effects or symptoms, but the third or tertiary stage will eventually start, when the bacteria erupts and attacks the body. This can cause problems involving the circulation, heart, brain, spinal cord liver, bones, and joints.

Other symptoms of the tertiary stage of Syphilis can include paralysis, blindness, and dementia.

The damage this STI can inflict can be serious enough to cause death.

Syphilis can also be passed on from a pregnant Mother to the unborn baby.
