Kent County Health Department
700 Fuller NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49507, 336-3085

We respect your right to responsible sexuality!

SYPHILIS

FACTS:
• Can get it by having vaginal, anal and oral sex with someone who has it
• Syphilis has three stages and the symptoms and signs of each stage are different.

1st Stage:
• Usually a painless, reddish sore called a chancre that comes 10-90 days after vaginal, oral and anal sex with someone who has it.
• The sore(s) will go away in 1-5 weeks, but Syphilis is still in the body.

2nd Stage:
• Symptoms include a rash, flu-like symptoms and loss of scalp hair that show up 2 weeks to 6 months after the chancre.
• These will go away in 2-6 weeks, but Syphilis is still in the body.

3rd Stage:
• A person may never have symptoms again but the infection stays in the body until they get the right medication for it.

Testing:
• A blood test

If Left Untreated:
• If not detected early, it can progress to another, more severe stage.
• Syphilis can permanently damage your heart, brain and other vital organs and can even kill you.
• Can be passed from a mother to her baby during pregnancy and cause problems in the baby.

Prevention/Protection:
• Have your partners get testing and medicine. If they are not cured, they can pass it back to you or to another.
• Use a condom (rubber) every time you have vaginal, oral and anal sex.
• Limit your number of sex partners - the more partners you have, the higher your risk for getting an infection.

For More Information from The Centers For Disease Control And Prevention:
Syphilis
Syphilis Information for MSM (Men who have Sex with Men)

If you think you have an infection, get tested right away!