

CONGENITAL SYPHILIS

Health Care Provider Advisory | March, 15, 2018

Rates of Congenital Syphilis are Increasing in the United States

Rates of congenital syphilis have increased across all regions of the United States according to the [CDC](#).

In Dane County, there has not been a congenital syphilis case in at least 10 years. However, there were three congenital syphilis cases in Milwaukee in 2017. Before that, the last documented case of congenital syphilis in Milwaukee was in 2012, according to the Milwaukee Health Commissioner.

All Pregnant Women Should Receive Syphilis Screening

[CDC](#) Testing Recommendations

1. All women should be screened serologically for syphilis at their first prenatal visit
2. For communities and populations in which the prevalence of syphilis is high and for women at high risk for infection (e.g., sex workers or women with male partners that have sex with men), serologic testing should also be performed twice during the third trimester; once at 28–32 weeks' gestation and again at delivery
3. Any woman who has a fetal death after 20 weeks' gestation should be tested for syphilis
4. No mother or neonate should leave the hospital without maternal serologic status having been documented at least once during pregnancy, and if the mother is considered high risk, documented at delivery

What is congenital syphilis?

Congenital syphilis occurs when a mother infected with syphilis transmits the infection to her child during pregnancy.

Congenital syphilis can cause severe illness, miscarriage, stillbirth, and early infant death.

More Information

- CDC fact sheet about congenital syphilis:
<https://www.cdc.gov/std/syphilis/stdfact-congenital-syphilis.htm>
- Specific guidance for providers:
<https://www.cdc.gov/std/tg2015/syphilis-pregnancy.htm>
- Article about the Syphilis and HIV cluster in Milwaukee:
<https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/local/milwaukee/2018/03/13/free-confidential-testing-offered-milwaukee-leaders-address-hiv-syphilis-cluster/420398002/>