

Some questions you may have

How will my identity be protected?

If you choose not to reveal your identity, your health professional or Partner Notification Officer will **NEVER** reveal your identity when contacting your partners.

Who are the people at risk of syphilis?

Syphilis is transmitted through unprotected oral, anal or vaginal sex and skin to skin contact during sex. Anyone who you have had sex with while you were infected with syphilis may be at risk. Your health professional or Partner Notification Officers will help you identify these people.

What if I don't know the name or contact details of the person I had sex with?

Partner Notification Officers may be able to contact your partners even if you do not have their full name or contact details. The time and place of sex, identifying features or even an internet nickname may help the Partner Notification Officer to find your partners.

Will I be able to have sex again without infecting my partners?

You should wait until seven days after you have completed your treatment before having sex.

How can syphilis be prevented?

Practicing safe sex (i.e. using a male or female condom and water based lubricants) is the best way to protect you and your partners from getting syphilis and other sexually transmitted infections.

Information for people diagnosed with **syphilis**

Partner Notification Officers

Address: Third Floor,
Melbourne Sexual Health Centre,
580 Swanston Street,
Carlton 3053

Phone: 03 9096 3367

Email: contact.tracers@health.vic.gov.au

Let your
partners
know

To receive this document in an accessible format phone 1300 651 160 or email [<infectious.diseases@health.vic.gov.au>](mailto:infectious.diseases@health.vic.gov.au)
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1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.
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Printed by Minuteman Press, Melbourne. (1502008)

Let your partners know

You have just been given a diagnosis of syphilis.

This may be a difficult time for you and you might still be struggling to come to terms with this diagnosis.

However, it is important to let your partner/s know as soon as possible that they may have been at risk of syphilis infection. Your health professional or Partner Notification Officers can help you through this process and ensure your identity is not revealed.

Why should you let your partners know?

- Your partners may have syphilis without any symptoms, or may not notice the early symptoms. Letting them know will allow them to get tested and treated. If not diagnosed and treated early syphilis can cause serious health problems.
- Syphilis is easily tested for and treated with antibiotics.
- If your current partner gets treated, it is good for you because it will stop you getting re-infected.
- If people know they are infected, they can take steps to prevent further transmission to other people.

Important facts to know

- Most of the time, people diagnosed with syphilis think they know who they got it from but they are often wrong. It could be **ANYONE** they had sex with.
- Your regular partner may or may not be infected.
- Most people who have been through the process of partner notification realized that it was not as “stressful” or “embarrassing” as they thought it would be.

How to do it?

You can let your partner know by having a conversation with them (either face-to-face or by phone), or you let them know without revealing your identity.

1. If you choose to let your partners know on your own:

- Your health professional can discuss with you strategies on the best time and way to have this discussion.

If you do NOT want to reveal your identity, you can do the following:

2. Let your partners know through the following websites:

- Let them know website:
www.letthemknow.org.au
- Drama Down under website:
www.thedramadownunder.info/introduction

You will be able to send an email, text message or letter without revealing your identity to your partners.

3. Get Partner Notification Officers to tell your partners

If you chose to do this:

- You will need to provide information to Partner Notification Officers who would then contact your partners and advise them to get tested.
- The Partner Notification Officers will **NEVER** reveal your identity to your partners.

Partner Notification Officers

- Partner Notification Officers are trained and experienced health professionals that can help you with the partner notification process.
- They will ask you a range of questions, including sexual practices, to help you identify people at risk that will need to be contacted.
- They can answer any questions you may have about syphilis prevention, treatment and the partner notification process.
- You can contact a Partner Notification Officer directly or your doctor can contact them (refer to the back of this brochure for contact information).

Where to get further information

- Better Health Channel website:
www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au
- Melbourne Sexual Health Centre website:
www.mshc.org.au/syphilis
- The Drama Down Under website:
www.thedramadownunder.info/bugs/syphilis

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