

# syphilis

## a sexually transmitted infection



### **Syphilis: What is it?**

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI). Symptoms may go away without treatment, but the disease will progress. It is usually spread when an infected person has anal, vaginal or oral sex without a condom. Babies born to mothers infected with syphilis may have serious health problems.

### **How do I know if I have it?**

**The only way to be sure is by having a blood test.** An early symptom is usually a small painless sore. The sore can be in the mouth, vagina, anus or on the penis. You may not notice it. This sore may disappear on its own.

Other symptoms may also appear, most commonly a rash. The rash often shows up on the palm of your hand, soles of your feet or the genital area.

### **WHAT can it do to me?**

If untreated, syphilis can show up many years later, causing damage to the brain, nerves, heart, eyes and blood vessels. The damage may be serious enough to cause death.

### **Can it be treated? YES**

Anyone who tests positive for syphilis must be treated. Also, all of their sex partners must be tested and treated.

Treatment for syphilis is free. After treatment, you should not have sex with anyone for 14 days, or until the sore(s) are completely healed.

### **Can I get it more than once? YES**

You can get syphilis any time you have sex with an infected partner. Having syphilis increases your risk of getting infected with HIV.

### **For information about testing and STI's call:**

#### **STI INFO LINES**

Winnipeg RHA **940-2200**

#### **AIDS/STI Information**

**(Nine Circles Community Health Centre)**

Winnipeg **945-2437**

Outside Winnipeg **1 (800) 782-2437**

#### **FACTS of LIFE Line (SERC)**

Winnipeg **947-9222**

Outside Winnipeg **1 (800) 432-1957**