Managing Syphilis

Syphilis is a common STD (sexually transmitted disease) spread through vaginal, anal, and oral sex. While being diagnosed with herpes can feel intimidating, understanding this condition is the first step towards taking control of its symptoms. Asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

Vocabulary to Know
Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here’s what they mean.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Stage</td>
<td>Sores develop at the original site of infection. These sores (usually painless) occur on or around the genitals, around the anus or in the rectum, or in or around the mouth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Stage</td>
<td>Symptoms (which may be mild and unnoticed) include a skin rash, swollen lymph nodes, and fever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latent Stage</td>
<td>No signs or symptoms are present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary Stage</td>
<td>Severe medical problems develop that may affect the heart, brain, and other organs of the body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congenital Syphilis</td>
<td>A disease that occurs when a mother with syphilis passes the infection on to her baby during her pregnancy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions to Ask
These questions will help you start a conversation with your doctor about how to best manage your syphilis.

About Symptoms
- What symptoms am I likely to develop?
- How quickly do symptoms appear?
- How long will symptoms last?

About Causes & Risk Factors
- How did I develop syphilis?
- How is syphilis spread?
- Can I be re-infected after treatment?

About Diagnosis
- Which stage am I in?
- Is there a cure for syphilis?

About Treatment
- What are the treatment options?
- Where do I find support?

About Prevention
- How can I prevent the transmission of syphilis?
- How can I protect my unborn baby during my pregnancy?