



Arkansas Department of Health

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Governor Asa Hutchinson
José R. Romero, MD, Secretary of Health

Public Health Alert: STI Outbreak in Arkansas April 2021

There is an **outbreak of syphilis in Arkansas**. The ADH wants providers to be aware of this increase and utilize the following recommendations for screening, treatment, and care of patients. For more detailed information regarding syphilis management, refer to the Provider Management and Treatment for Syphilis Guide included with this notice.

KEY POINTS:

- Every region in Arkansas is seeing an abnormally high number of syphilis cases, especially among females.
- Arkansas reported 19 probable cases of congenital syphilis and 4 syphilitic stillbirths in 2020.
- Syphilis among pregnant females is a special concern due to the potential for serious sequelae of congenital syphilis. Untreated syphilis during pregnancy can lead to stillbirth, preterm delivery, and other congenital abnormalities. Congenital syphilis is preventable by early detection of maternal infection and appropriate treatment prior to delivery.
- The State of Arkansas requires testing of all pregnant women at the 1st prenatal care visit and 3rd trimester (between 28-32 weeks gestation). Testing at delivery is required if not done during the pregnancy. This applies each time the woman becomes pregnant.
- Late or missed doses of Bicillin in pregnancy is not acceptable. The treatment series must be restarted if there are more than seven days between doses.
- Advise patients with syphilis to notify their sex partners and encourage those partners to seek testing and treatment immediately.

REPORTING

- Report all positive syphilis serologies and infections to the health department within 24 hours.
- Reports should include:
 - Reporter's name, location, and phone number
 - Disease name and onset date
 - Patient's name, address, phone number, age, sex, race, and pregnancy status
 - Attending physician's name, location, and phone number
 - Any pertinent clinical, laboratory, and treatment information
 - Report by fax to 501-661-2428 or by phone to 501-537-8969 (afterhours 1-800-554-5738).

For consultation regarding syphilis testing and management, contact the Infectious Disease Branch at 501-661-2408.

Sincerely,

Dr. Naveen Patil

Naveen Patil, MD
Infectious Disease Medical Director