



Image 3<sup>5</sup>

## Congenital syphilis incidence in the United States

The rate of congenital syphilis cases in the has increased tenfold from 2012 to 2022.<sup>5</sup>

- More than 3,700 babies were born with congenital syphilis in the United States in 2022, including<sup>5</sup>
  - 231 stillbirths
  - 51 infant deaths

5. U.S. Syphilis Cases in Newborns Continue to Increase: A 10-Times Increase Over a Decade. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Published November 7, 2023. Accessed August 28, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2023/s1107-newborn-syphilis.html>.

## Prevention Strategies

The rising amount of syphilis in pregnancy and congenital syphilis cases highlights the critical need for more effective risk reduction measures.

1. Early education
2. Prompt diagnosis
3. Timely screening and treatment

## Risk Avoidance

Refraining from sexual contact is the only way to COMPLETELY prevent sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy.

## Partner Notification

The successful diagnosis and treatment of the partner(s) of pregnant women with syphilis is crucial to reducing re-infection rates.

- “Practice of the newly diagnosed person notifying the sexual partner(s) that they may have been exposed to infection”<sup>6(p3)</sup>

6. Park E, Yip J, Harville E, et al. Gaps in the congenital syphilis prevention cascade: qualitative findings from Kern County, California. *BMC Infectious Diseases*. 2022; 22:129-129. doi:10.1186/s12879-022-07100-3



## Congenital syphilis

An Informational Brochure for Patients

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# What is congenital syphilis?

**Congenital syphilis is an infection in newborns passed to the baby from the mother during pregnancy or delivery.<sup>1</sup>**

- Congenital syphilis is completely preventable and inexpensive to treat.
- Research shows the need for more effective prevention measures.
- There has been a drastic increase in the number of women with syphilis during pregnancy and congenital syphilis cases.



Image 1<sup>2</sup>

1. McDonald R, O'Callaghan K, Torrone E, et al. Vital Signs: Missed Opportunities for Preventing Congenital Syphilis - United States, 2022. *MMWR. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. 2023; 72:1269-1274. doi:10.1097/INF.00000000000004202
2. About Congenital Syphilis. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Published April 8, 2024. Accessed August 28, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/syphilis/about/about-congenital-syphilis.html>

## Clinical Features (Signs and Symptoms)

### Congenital syphilis can cause<sup>1</sup>

- Miscarriage
- Stillbirth
- Premature birth
- Low birth weight
- Newborn death



Image 2<sup>3</sup>

### Babies born with congenital syphilis can have severe complications such as<sup>1</sup>

- Deformed bones
- Anemia
- Enlarged liver and spleen
- Jaundice
- Brain and nerve problems
- Blindness and deafness
- Meningitis
- Severe skin rashes

3. Understanding the Social Factors Associated with Congenital Syphilis. American Sexual Health Association. Published 2024. Accessed October 11, 2024. <https://www.ashasexualhealth.org/understanding-the-social-factors-associated-with-congenital-syphilis/>



## Can it be treated, and how?<sup>4</sup>

**Yes, congenital syphilis can be cured with antibiotics.**

- Penicillin G is the only effective antibiotics for treating syphilis during pregnancy.
- The recommended treatment for pregnant women is one to three shots of benzathine penicillin G, depending on the stage of infection.
- **Allergies** – Pregnant women who are allergic to penicillin should undergo desensitization and then be treated with penicillin
- **Shortages** – The FDA announced current penicillin shortages and determined pregnant women with syphilis take priority in receiving the medication.

4. Sankaran D, Partridge E, Lakshminrusimha S. Congenital Syphilis—An Illustrative Review. *Children (Basel)*. 2023; 10:1310. doi:10.3390/children10081310