



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Gotham Center
42-09 28th St.
Long Island City, NY 11101

February 2026

Dear Colleague,

Congenital syphilis is a growing concern nationally and in NYC.¹ Congenital syphilis can result in devastating health outcomes, including stillbirth, preterm birth, and early infant death. There were 37 reported cases of congenital syphilis in NYC in 2024, including one stillbirth and one infant who was born alive and then died soon after. This increase in cases continued even as reported syphilis among females in NYC declined, with a 7% decrease in case numbers in 2024 compared with 2023. In 2024, most female cases (78%) were among people reported as Black (27%) and Latina (51%), and 50% of cases were among individuals age 30 or younger.

Congenital syphilis can be prevented through early detection and adequate treatment of syphilis during pregnancy. This toolkit contains clinical tools and resources to support health care providers in adopting key action steps to stem the tide of congenital syphilis in NYC:

1. Perform pregnancy testing for all people who are diagnosed with syphilis and could become pregnant.
2. Consider any health care encounter during pregnancy an opportunity to screen for syphilis, including encounters outside of usual prenatal care settings, such as in emergency departments, jails, shelters, syringe service programs, and parent and child health programs.
3. Screen for syphilis three times each during pregnancy, as required by the NYC Health Code and New York State Public Health Law, and as

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Sexually transmitted infections surveillance, 2023.
https://www.cdc.gov/sti-statistics/media/pdfs/2025/09/2023_sti_surveillance_report_final_508.pdf

recommended by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists²: (1) at the first prenatal care visit; (2) at 28 weeks of pregnancy or as soon thereafter as reasonably possible, but no later than at 32 weeks of pregnancy (early third trimester); and (3) at delivery.

4. Follow recommended STI treatment guidelines.³ Presumptively treat patients (including pregnant patients) who report having a sex partner who has syphilis or symptoms of syphilis. Penicillin G benzathine (Bicillin L-A) is the only recommended treatment for pregnant patients diagnosed with syphilis.

All toolkit materials and additional supporting information can be downloaded at nyc.gov/health/congenitalsyphilis.

Thank you for your commitment to eliminating congenital syphilis and protecting the health of all New Yorkers.

Sincerely,
The NYC Health Department

² American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Screening or syphilis in pregnancy. Reaffirmed October 2025. <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/practice-advisory/articles/2024/04/screening-for-syphilis-in-pregnancy>

³ American Sexually Transmitted Diseases Association. Federal guidelines, reports, and resources. <https://www.astda.org/federal-guidelines-reports-and-resources>