

ATTACK OF THE CURSED SYPHILIS

IT'S LURKING IN THE DEPTHS. WATCH OUT!



Starring
SYPHILIS - YOU - AND YOU - AND MAYBE YOU TOO

www.actoronto.org/syphilis



CAN ALSO BE SPREAD THROUGH
SKIN-TO-SKIN CONTACT.



IF YOU'VE GOT HIV, SYPHILIS CAN
HIT YOU HARDER AND FASTER.



TREATABLE IF CAUGHT EARLY.
GET TESTED.

FOR MORE INFO:

ACT at actoronto.org/syphilis

InSPOT at inspot.org

AIDS and Sexual Health Infoline: 1-800-668-2437

Hassle Free Men's Clinic: 416-922-0566

Or **text:** M2Men to 365247.

AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT)

399 Church Street, 4th floor

Toronto, ON M5B 2J6

Tel: 416-340-2437

Fax: 416-340-8224

Web: www.actoronto.org



SYPHILIS IS BACK.

Toronto has seen a huge rise in syphilis over the past seven years. Gay and bisexual men have been hit hardest by it, accounting for over 80% of infections in men. Almost 1/2 of syphilis cases in 2008 were among men who are HIV-positive.

WHAT IS SYPHILIS?

It's a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by bacteria that attacks the body in three stages. You may have syphilis and not know it. Some people develop visible symptoms of the syphilis infection, but others don't.

STAGE ONE:

The first signs of syphilis surface anywhere from 10 to 90 days after exposure. You may notice painless sores on your penis, near your anus, or in your throat. The sores will go away after 3 to 6 weeks. The syphilis, however, won't.

STAGE TWO:

4 to 10 weeks after the sores, you may notice a red rash on your chest, palms, genitals, or the soles of your feet. Muscle and joint pain, fever and patchy hair loss are also common in stage two. These symptoms can go away without treatment, but again, the syphilis won't.

STAGE THREE:

The sores and rashes will be gone but the syphilis will live on. Over time the bacteria will attack your body causing serious damage to your brain, heart, eyes and bones. This process occurs over a 10 to 30 year period.

HIV AND SYPHILIS.

If you've got HIV, syphilis will hit you harder and faster, and may also be more difficult to treat. If you've got syphilis, you're more likely to get HIV or pass it on to someone if you have unsafe sex.

HOW IT'S SPREAD.

For the most part it's passed on through sex. Anal, oral, you name it. But you can also get it by skin-to-skin contact, or sharing drug paraphernalia and cigarettes.

GETTING TESTED.

A simple blood test can tell you if you've got it.

CAN IT BE CURED?

If it's caught early, syphilis can be treated with antibiotics.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF.

Always use condoms when having sex. They're not foolproof, but they're better than nothing. Don't share drug paraphernalia or cigarettes. Get tested for syphilis on a regular basis. Even if you've had syphilis before, you can get it again.

TELLING SOMEONE THEY MAY HAVE SYPHILIS.

If you think you've passed syphilis onto someone but don't know how to break the news to them, contact your local public health department. They'll get in touch with the person for you, but won't disclose your identity. You can also send them an anonymous e-card by visiting inspot.org.

WHERE TO GET TESTED.

Your family doctor, a Sexual Health Clinic, or Hassle Free Men's Clinic can all test you for syphilis.

