



SAN BENITO COUNTY

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES
Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Health Advisory INCREASE IN SYPHILIS CASES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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California has experienced an increase in syphilis over the past several years. This concerning trend has been accompanied by an increase in congenital syphilis cases. San Benito County's data reflects similar trends.

Syphilis, in any stage, when diagnosed or suspected, is reportable to the local health department. This can be done by encrypted email, fax, or mail, and must be done within one working day of identification. Prompt and effective treatment of all syphilis cases and their sexual contacts will prevent the spread of syphilis in San Benito County, especially in pregnant women and their neonates.

Prevention of congenital syphilis is an urgent public health matter. Congenital syphilis can be prevented if the mother is diagnosed and treated appropriately and without delay.

Benzathine penicillin G is the recommended treatment for syphilis, and the only recommended treatment for pregnant women with syphilis. Treatment of syphilis in pregnancy is nearly 100% effective at preventing the potentially devastating outcomes associated with congenital syphilis, including long-term morbidity and stillbirths, but it needs to be administered promptly and correctly.

You can obtain benzathine penicillin G at no cost from San Benito County Public Health Services in order to treat your patients with syphilis. Please call 831-637-5367 when you have a syphilis case in order to arrange delivery or pickup. Ask to speak to a nurse.

Pregnant women with syphilis who are allergic to penicillin must undergo desensitization and treatment in an inpatient setting. The Health Officer can help providers arrange treatment under these circumstances.

The Health Officer is recommending that prenatal providers screen ALL San Benito County pregnant women at the initial prenatal visit, again EARLY in the third trimester of pregnancy, and again at delivery. Because California is experiencing high syphilis morbidity, best practice and guidelines established by CDPH, CDC, and USPSTF dictate screening for syphilis three times during pregnancy.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding syphilis, syphilis in pregnancy, or congenital syphilis, please contact us at 831-637-5367.

RESOURCES

CDPH Syphilis Clinical Guidelines

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Syphilis-ClinicalGuidelines.aspx>

CDPH Provider Update on Congenital Syphilis

https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Congenital_Syphilis_Provider_Update.pdf

California Guidelines for Screening and Treatment in Pregnancy

https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/CS_Eval_Management_pregnant%20women.pdf

CDC STI Treatment Guidelines

<http://www.cdc.gov/std/tg2015/default.htm>

For more information, please call Public Health Services at (831) 637-5367; go to San Benito Public Health Services website <http://hhsa.cosb.us/publichealth/>,

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Health Alert: Warrants immediate action or attention.
Health Advisory: Provides information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.