



**ALAMEDA COUNTY HEALTH CARE SERVICES AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

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Congenital Syphilis Health Update

Congenital Syphilis (CS) Screening Guidelines for Pregnant Women

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Situation

Syphilis rates are rising in Alameda County, across California, and throughout the country. Nationally, the rate of congenital syphilis has risen 40% in the last year alone, to a rate of 33 per 100,000 live births in 2018. California has the fifth-highest rate of congenital syphilis in the country, with 68 cases per 100,000 live births in 2018. In Alameda County in 2017, the rate of congenital syphilis was 26 per 100,000 live births. **Healthcare providers treating pregnant women can prevent congenital syphilis by following [CDC recommended screening and treatment guidelines for pregnant women](#) living in communities with high syphilis prevalence.**

Actions Requested of Clinicians

1. **Refer or provide access** to prenatal care for all pregnant women.
2. **Screen all pregnant women for syphilis:**
 - At their first prenatal visit as required by [California state law](#); and
 - In the third trimester (ideally at 28-32 weeks gestation), regardless of individual risk.
3. **Treat infected individuals** – regardless of pregnancy status – and their partner(s) without delay. Current CDC Treatment Guidelines recommend benzathine penicillin G (Bicillin L-A) as the only treatment option for pregnant women with confirmed or suspected syphilis infection. The complete [CDC recommendations for the treatment of syphilis](#) are available online.
4. **Rescreen at delivery** if the mother was not screened at 28-32 weeks gestation [or is at high risk* for contracting syphilis](#). For any stillbirth, the mother should receive syphilis testing at delivery regardless of prior testing and the fetal remains examination should include testing for syphilis.
5. **Report all cases of syphilis** at any stage to the Alameda County Department of Public Health within one working day of positive test results: Phone: (510) 267-3220; Fax: (510) 268-2036

For non-pregnant patients, it is still important to provide appropriate [STD and HIV screening](#).

If you have follow-up questions or would like consultation regarding these guidelines, please call the STD Control and Prevention Unit at **(510) 267-3220**.

Resources:

- [ACPHD Disease Reporting and Control Website](#)
- [California STD/ HIV Screening Recommendations in Pregnancy](#)
- [CDPH Prenatal Syphilis Pocket Card](#)
- [CDC Syphilis During Pregnancy](#)
- Clinical questions related to the treatment of syphilis may also be directed to
 - [CDPH STD Control Branch](#) Clinician Warm Line – (510) 620-3400
 - [STD Clinical Consultation Network](#)
- [California STD Screening Recommendations](#)
- [CDC STD Treatment Guidelines](#)

*High risk defined as: missed 28-32 week rescreen; lives in high morbidity area; HIV-positive; other STD diagnosed within the past 12 months; illicit substance use; reports sex exchange; homeless/ unstable housing; history of incarceration within the past 12 months; multiple sex partners, or partner with other partners; untreated partner