



Syphilis Screening in Pregnancy

Due to increasing syphilis rates in the United States, the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG) has updated their screening guidelines as of April 2024.

Syphilis testing is now recommended for all pregnant patients in the 1st trimester, 3rd trimester and on admission to the hospital for labor and birth.

What is syphilis?

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) that can cause serious health problems without treatment. You can get syphilis by direct contact with a syphilis sore during vaginal, anal, or oral sex.

What is the concern for syphilis in pregnancy?

If you are pregnant and have syphilis, you can give the infection to your unborn baby. This is known as congenital syphilis and the rates of this have been rising in the United States. Having syphilis can lead to a low-birth-weight-baby. It can make it more likely you will deliver your baby too early or stillborn (a baby born dead).

At birth, a baby with a syphilis infection may not have signs or symptoms of disease. However, if the baby does not receive treatment right away, the baby may develop serious problems within a few weeks. These babies can have health problems, such as cataracts, deafness, or seizures, and can die.

How is syphilis treated?

Syphilis can be treated with antibiotics.

How do we test for syphilis?

We can test for syphilis with a blood test.

When do we test for syphilis?

At InterMed you will have testing done at your first obstetric visit at InterMed between 10-12 weeks of pregnancy and again at 28 weeks of pregnancy.

Upon your admission to Maine Medical Center for labor and birth they will repeat the testing.

References:

Syphilis – CDC Basic Fact Sheet (<https://www.cdc.gov/std/syphilis/stdfact-syphilis.htm>)

ACOG: News Release *ACOG Recommends Obstetrician-Gynecologists Increase Syphilis Screening for Pregnant Individuals* Apr 18, 2024