

iMedix: Your Personal Health Advisor.

Syphilis

Overview

What is it

Syphilis Causes of Syphilis *Treponema pallidum* bacterium Transmission through sexual contact (vaginal, anal, or oral sex) with someone who is infected Pregnant women can pass the infection to their babies (congenital syphilis) Direct contact with syphilis sores, rashes, or mucous membrane lesions Unprotected sex with multiple partners Sharing contaminated drug paraphernalia Diagnosis Medical History and Physical Examination: A healthcare provider will review the patient's medical history, including the presence of any symptoms or potential exposure to syphilis. They will also conduct a physical examination to check for any signs of the disease, such as rash, sores, or swollen lymph nodes. Laboratory Tests: Diagnosing syphilis requires specific laboratory tests, which may include: 1. Blood Tests (Serology): Blood samples are taken to detect antibodies produced by the body in response to a syphilis infection. Common blood tests include: – Venereal Disease Research Laboratory (VDRL) test – Rapid Plasma Reagin (RPR) test – *Treponema*-specific tests (e.g., Fluorescent *Treponema* Antibody Absorption test, Enzyme Immunoassay, etc.) 2. Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR): PCR tests are used to detect the genetic material (DNA) of the syphilis bacteria in various body fluids or tissues. 3. Darkfield Microscopy: This test involves examining fluid from syphilis sores or other lesions under a special microscope to directly visualize the *Treponema pallidum* bacteria. Imaging Studies: In some cases, imaging studies may be necessary to assess the extent of syphilis infection. This may include: 1. X-rays: Chest x-rays can be used to check for syphilis-related complications, such as aortic damage in advanced stages of the disease. 2. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) or Computed Tomography (CT) scans: These imaging techniques help evaluate neurosyphilis (syphilis affecting the nervous system) or other organ involvement.
