

Treponema pallidum is a bacterium responsible for causing [syphilis](#), a sexually transmitted infection (STI). It's a spirochete bacterium, meaning it has a distinctive spiral shape.

Syphilis is typically transmitted through sexual contact, including vaginal, anal, or oral sex, as well as through skin-to-skin contact with an active lesion or sore. The infection progresses through various stages if left untreated, beginning with primary syphilis, characterized by the appearance of a painless sore (chancre) at the site of infection. Without treatment, syphilis can progress to secondary and tertiary stages, affecting multiple organ systems and potentially leading to serious complications, including neurosyphilis.

Diagnosis of syphilis usually involves a combination of clinical evaluation, blood tests to detect antibodies against *T. pallidum*, and sometimes examination of fluid from syphilitic sores or cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) in cases of suspected neurosyphilis.

Treatment for syphilis typically involves antibiotics, such as penicillin, administered according to the stage of the infection and any complications present. Early detection and treatment are crucial to prevent the progression of the disease and reduce the risk of long-term complications.

Efforts to prevent syphilis include practicing safe sex, using condoms, regular screening for sexually transmitted infections, and prompt treatment of infected individuals and their sexual partners.

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