



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES  
Bureau for Public Health  
Office of Epidemiology and Prevention Services

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## Recommendations for Syphilis Management during Pregnancy

In West Virginia, congenital syphilis cases have continually increased largely due to inadequate or no prenatal care among women who are pregnant and test positive for syphilis. The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (WVDHHR) recommends the following for the management of syphilis during pregnancy:

1. Pregnant people must be tested for syphilis under W. Va. Code §16-4A-1. Two serology tests should be performed, a non-treponemal test and a treponemal test, with one reflexing to the other when the first result is positive. Due to the significant rise in syphilis cases, all pregnant women in West Virginia should be considered “high risk.” The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s recommendation is to **retest women at 28-32 weeks gestation, and again at delivery**, to ensure initial treatment was successful and/or rule out reinfection. Please refer to the CDC testing algorithm and recommendations.
2. Use the DHHR “Syphilis Staging and Treatment Algorithm” to stage and adequately treat pregnant women who test positive for syphilis. Benzathine penicillin is the **only** recommended treatment for syphilis. Pregnant women who are allergic to penicillin must be desensitized. Please schedule pregnant patients **no more than seven days** between doses for pregnant patients staged as late syphilis or those with unknown duration. Patients who receive doses >9 days apart must restart the course of treatment.
3. If retesting during pregnancy shows no change or a two-fold increase in RPR titer, the patient can be considered for a single dose of benzathine penicillin (administered at least 30 days prior to delivery) if re-infection cannot be ruled out.

If you have questions about syphilis testing and treatment, call DHHR’s Division of STD, HIV, Hepatitis, and Tuberculosis at 304-558-2195 or email [wvstd@wv.gov](mailto:wvstd@wv.gov).