



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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Dear Perinatal Provider:

During 2016 we experienced a thirty percent increase in infectious syphilis in Washington State. The epidemiology of syphilis is changing from primarily affecting men who have sex with men to affecting more heterosexuals. As a result, during 2016 five women delivered babies with congenital syphilis -- the highest number of babies detected with congenital syphilis since 1992.

**We need your help to eliminate congenital syphilis in Washington State. Please take the following actions:**

- Test all pregnant women for syphilis at the first prenatal visit or at the time pregnancy is confirmed.
- For pregnant women at high risk for syphilis (e.g., has multiple current partners or a new partner, has sex while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, has sex in exchange for money or drugs), repeat testing during the third trimester (at approximately 28 weeks' gestation) and at delivery.
- Make sure all mothers have been tested for syphilis at least once during pregnancy or at delivery before discharging them from the hospital.
- Treat women infected with syphilis immediately according to CDC's STD Treatment Guidelines (<https://www.cdc.gov/std/tg2015/syphilis.htm>).
- Report cases of syphilis to your local health department (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/AboutUs/PublicHealthSystem/LocalHealthJurisdictions>).

Thank you for the work you do every day to keep moms and babies in our state healthy.

Sincerely,

Kathy Lofy, MD  
State Health Officer