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Syphilis checks: routine for all STI checks and pregnancy

There is a concern in New Zealand about the number of cases of congenital syphilis, and that testing in pregnancy is not routine. There is also a low incidence of testing as part of routine sexual health checks.

The New Zealand Sexual Health Society Guideline¹ recommends a test for:

- men who have sex with men (at least annually or with every sexual health check)
- HIV positive (with every round of HIV bloods)
- routine antenatal screen and later in pregnancy.
- sexual contacts of someone with syphilis
- routine sexual health check.

Signs or symptoms of infectious syphilis:

- genital ulcer
- men who have sex with men with any genital symptoms or rash
- any rash affecting palms or soles of feet
- pyrexia of unknown origin and/or persistent lymphadenopathy, alopecia, or unexplained liver function disturbance.

This Gem has been approved by Massimo Giola, Sexual Health Physician, Tauranga Hospital.

Reference:

1. NZ Sexual Health Society Guidelines [View here](#)

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