WHAT TO KNOW IF YOU TEST POSITIVE FOR SYPHILIS DURING PREGNANCY

AMERICAN COLLEGE of NURSE-MIDWIVES

Syphilis is curable.

Be kind and gentle with yourself if you test positive.

Treatment with penicillin injections is safe during pregnancy and can protect you and your baby.

TREATMENT

- The number of penicillin injections needed to cure syphilis depends on the stage of syphilis.
- Most people need three injections. They will be scheduled 7 days apart. You must get the penicillin injections exactly as scheduled to cure syphilis.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF TREATMENT

- The most common side effect is mild, temporary pain where you got the injection.
- Contact your midwife right away if you have fever/chills, headache, and/or muscle aches within the first 24 hours after starting treatment or if you experience any signs of early labor or less fetal movement.
- 10-35% of people will experience one or more of these symptoms. This is a reaction to treatment and not an allergic reaction.

MAKING SURE SYPHILIS IS CURED

8 weeks after treatment a blood test will be done to make sure treatment is working.

SEX AND SEXUAL PARTNER(S)

- Any sexual partners should be tested for syphilis and treated if needed.
- Care providers and health department professionals can help notify partner(s) without naming you if that is helpful.
- All types of sex should be avoided until 7 days after you and any sexual partners complete treatment.

CHECKING A BABY FOR SYPHILIS

- If a birth parent tests positive for syphilis during pregnancy and/or the baby has signs of syphilis such as a rash or discharge from the nose, the baby will be tested for syphilis.
- Syphilis testing for babies includes a blood test or taking a sample from a sore or rash.
- Sometimes babies test positive even though they don't have syphilis. That's because they can get antibodies from the placenta during pregnancy. Blood tests over time can tell us if the positive result is because of antibodies or a syphilis infection.

TREATING A BABY FOR SYPHILIS

- Babies should be treated for syphilis if their birth parent was treated less than 30 days before the birth, if they have signs of syphilis, and/or test positive.
- Babies can be safely treated with penicillin injections, sometimes as one injection or in the hospital for 10 days.

TELL YOUR MIDWIFE

if you are allergic to penicillin or have HIV. This will affect how you will be treated for syphilis during pregnancy.