

Texas Health and Safety Code §81.090 Mandates Three Syphilis Tests During Pregnancy and After Birth

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Effective September 1, 2019, Texas Health and Safety Code §81.090 was enacted to increase syphilis testing in pregnant women.

The new state legislation mandates three syphilis tests:

- At first prenatal care examination
- During third trimester (no earlier than 28 weeks gestation)
- At delivery

Syphilis cases have been increasing in men and women nationally, including women of childbearing age. This new requirement comes as the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) has seen a sharp increase in the number of syphilis infections passed from mother to child.

Untreated syphilis during pregnancy can result in devastating health outcomes for the baby, including stillbirth or perinatal death, but congenital syphilis can be prevented by timely treatment of maternal syphilis.

Providers may refer to the October 3, 2019, news release from DSHS reminding health-care professionals about the new state law increasing syphilis testing during pregnancy. This news release also includes a health advisory with testing and treatment guidance for health professionals.

Resources

For more information, see:

- [October 3, 2019 DSHS News Release](#)
- [DSHS Health Advisory](#)
- [Congenital Syphilis in Texas](#)
- [CDC STD Treatment Guidelines](#)
- [Texas HIV/STD Reports](#)
- [DSHS Reporting Rules for Notifiable Conditions](#)

- [Syphilis Fact Sheets](#)
- [Diagnostic Testing and Pregnancy](#)
- [STD Awareness Week](#) – April 12, 2020 through April 18, 2020

For more information, call the TMHP Contact Center at 800-925-9126.