

In Dermatology

Secondary Syphilis

Secondary syphilis manifests in various ways. It usually presents with a cutaneous eruption within 2-10 weeks after the primary chancre and is most florid 3-4 months after infection. The eruption may be subtle; 25% of patients may be unaware of skin changes. Multiple annular plaques are often seen, as shown in the figure.



Treatment of syphilis includes the following:

- Penicillin is the drug of choice to treat syphilis.
- Doxycycline is the best alternative for treating early and late latent syphilis.
- CDC recommends the use of the RPR-based screening algorithm. When there is a low epidemiologic risk or clinical probability of syphilis, the positive predictive value of an isolated unconfirmed reactive treponemal chemoluminescence test or enzyme immunoassay is low.

***Prof. Jayakar Thomas
Consultant Dermatologist, Chennai***