



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE

C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER – GOVERNOR
RICHARD M. ARMSTRONG – DIRECTOR

ELKE SHAW-TULLOCH, MHS – ADMINISTRATOR
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Bureau of Laboratories
2220 Old Penitentiary Road
Boise, ID 83712
PHONE 208-334-2235
FAX 208-334-4067

Syphilis Interpretation Guidelines

Interpretation of the syphilis test involves careful consideration of the patient's history, symptoms, and antibiotic use. Below is a table to aid in syphilis test interpretation.

RESULTS	INTERPRETATION
VDRL nonreactive AND TPPA reactive	Probable past treated syphilis, but may be untreated late latent syphilis, or false positive TPPA test. This pattern can also be seen in early primary syphilis. Recommend retesting in 2-3 weeks if there is possible recent exposure to syphilis.
VDRL reactive AND TPPA nonreactive	Probable false positive VDRL reaction. This pattern can also be seen in early primary syphilis. Recommend retesting in 2-3 weeks if there is possible recent exposure to syphilis.
VDRL reactive AND TPPA reactive	Consistent with syphilis infection.

Syphilis must be reported by law in Idaho. If results indicate syphilis infection, call the disease reporting line at the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare within 7 days (1-800-632-5927) to report the name, sex, and age or birthdate of the patient. The STD/AIDS program has data on past reported cases of syphilis in Idaho. This may include serologic and treatment information about this patient which could prove helpful in your evaluation.

Copies of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's complete STD Treatment Guidelines may be obtained free of charge from your district health department's STD epidemiologist.