

CHLAMYDIA

INFORMATION & FACT SHEET

THE GENDER
HC CENTRE
INC

CONTACT: MEDIA@GENDERCENTRE.ORG.AU

WHAT IS CHLAMYDIA

Chlamydia (kluh-MID-e-uh) is a class of communicable disease known as a Sexually Transmissible Infection (STI). STIs by definition are transmitted through sexual contact and are caused by a bacterium called Chlamydia trachomatis.

Many people, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, who are infected do not have symptoms of infection but can still spread the disease.

Chlamydia can affect the urethra (the urine passage), cervix (the neck of the womb), rectum, anus, throat, and eyes. If chlamydia is not properly treated it can cause serious complications.

Chlamydia is the most commonly reported communicable disease in Australia.

Chlamydia, has shown early signs of antibiotic resistance. The threat prompted the World Health Organization to release new guidelines for treating Chlamydia.

STIGMA

Stigmatising people because of a disease is never acceptable. Anyone, regardless of gender, sexual orientation or sexual behavior, can become infected with Chlamydia or pass it on.

Many people avoid testing due to the stigma associated with an STI. Shaming anyone due to an STI is not appropriate.

#STOPTHESTIGMA

TRANSMISSION

HOW IS CHLAMYDIA SPREAD?

- Chlamydia is spread by having unprotected vaginal, anal or oral sex with someone who has the infection
- Chlamydia can be transmitted even when there are no noticeable symptoms
- If a pregnant person has chlamydia, the baby can become infected during birth
- Frequently asymptomatic

RISK

WHO IS AT RISK?

- Anyone who has unprotected sex
- Young sexually active people
- Anyone who has recently changed sexual partners
- Anyone who has recently had another sexually transmitted infection
- Chlamydia is the most commonly reported communicable disease in Australia.

SYMPTOMS

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CHLAMYDIA?

A person may have chlamydia for months, or even years, without knowing it, however symptoms may occur within 2-14 days after infection.

Symptoms may include:

- Cramps or pain in the lower abdomen
- Bleeding between regular periods
- Pain when passing urine
- Bleeding or pain during or after sex
- A change in her vaginal discharge
- A discharge from the penis
- Pain when passing urine
- Swollen and sore testicles
- Anal pain or discharge

As Chlamydia is frequently asymptomatic, regular STI screening is key to preventing serious infection and the spread of infection.

Immunity to new infection is not provided by previous infection.

COMPLICATIONS

WHAT ARE THE LONG TERM EFFECTS?

A person may have chlamydia for months, or even years, without knowing it, however symptoms may occur within 2-14 days after infection. Most Chlamydia infections are asymptomatic. If left untreated complications may include:

- Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). This is when one or more of the reproductive organs that are situated in the pelvis become inflamed.
- Pelvic adhesions and chronic pelvic pain
- Ectopic pregnancy (when the pregnancy develops in the fallopian tubes instead of in the uterus)
- Infertility due to damage to the fallopian tubes (by scar tissue)
- Recurrent urethritis, an inflammation (swelling and irritation) of the urethra
- Epididymitis (which involves the tube to the testes)
- Arthritis
- Conjunctivitis and uveitis (eye inflammation)
- Proctitis (inflammation of the rectum).

PREVENTION

HOW DO I PREVENT CHLAMYDIA?

- Test regularly
- Monitor for symptoms
- Avoid having sex with infected people
- Use a condom or dental dam during sexual activity
- It is recommended that you should not have sex with anyone who has been diagnosed with chlamydia. This includes using a condom or dental dam, until 7 days after treatment is completed.

TESTING

- A urine test. Urinate into a sterile container at least 1 hour after your last urination
- Cervical swab. A small swab (cotton bud) is gently wiped over the cervix (the area just inside the vagina). This can be done during a routine Pap test
- Urethral swab. A slim swab is inserted into the end of the penis
- Anal swab. A small swab (cotton bud) is gently wiped over the anus

EXPOSURE

WHAT IF I HAVE BEEN EXPOSED?

- Abstain from sexual activity
- Visit your GP or local sexual health clinic to be tested as soon as possible

Immunity to new infection is not provided by previous infection.

If you are treated for chlamydia but your sexual partner is not, you could be re-infected and they may spread their infection to other people.

For more information contact the Sexual Health Infoline Freecall 1800 451 624.

INFECTED

WHAT IF I HAVE BEEN INFECTED?

If you have symptoms:

- Seek medical attention
- Notify any sexual partners
- Abstain from sexual activity for 7 days after single dose antibiotics or until completion of a 7-day course of antibiotics, to prevent spreading the infection to partners
- 3 months after being treated, it is imperative to have another test to make sure that any re-infections can also be treated
- Continue regular testing

Immunity to new infection is not provided by previous infection.

If you are treated for chlamydia but your sexual partner is not, you could be re-infected and they may spread their infection to other people.

Contact the Sexual Health Infoline Freecall 1800 451 624

REPORTING

WHO DO I NOTIFY IF AM INFECTED?

Inform all your sexual partner/s. They may also have the infection and communicating with them allows them to be tested and treated. This will ensure they don't spread the infection to others, or experience serious long term impacts. Your doctor can help you decide who may be at risk and help you to notify them. There are several ways you can inform them in person or anonymously via:

- Phone
- SMS
- Email
- Write them a letter
- The website "Let Them Know" also provides advice and assistance in contacting partners.

Laboratories are required to notify cases of chlamydia to the local public health unit. This information is confidential. Public health staff use this data to better understand who is at risk and help plan activities to prevent new infections in the future.

TREATMENT

- It is important to see your doctor or sexual health clinic to get tested and treated
- Chlamydia is easily cured by antibiotics. Your healthcare provider will advise you which antibiotic is most effective to take but usually only a single dose is required.
- After treatment, if the symptoms return, return to your doctor or sexual health clinic
- 3 months after being treated, it is imperative to have another test to make sure that any re-infections can also be treated

VACCINATION

Currently there is no vaccine for chlamydia however, there may be one in the near future if further clinical trials show it to be safe and effective.

**TAKE
ACTION
TO
PROTECT
YOURSELF
AND YOUR
COMMUNITY**

**TEST
REGULARLY**



STEPS

STAY INFORMED

- Seek information from trusted sources like local health authorities
- Speak to your Dr or Sexual Health Clinic to discuss your risk
- Don't use Doctor Google as your information source
- If you have questions about Chlamydia, contact the NSW Sexual Health Infolink on 1800 451 624.

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RISK ASSESSMENT

- Know your STI status by testing regularly
- Communicate with sexual partners and ask them if they test regularly and or have any history of STIs
- Assess sexual partners for any leaky or unusual discharge from their genitals
- Make sure you have Condoms and or Dental Dams on hand for planned or unplanned sexual encounters

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TAKE PRECAUTIONS

- Test regularly
- Monitor for symptoms
- Avoid having sex with infected people
- Use a condom or dental dam during sexual activity with others
- It is recommended that you should not have sex with anyone who has been diagnosed with chlamydia. This includes using a condom or dental dam, until 7 days after treatment is completed.

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MONITOR

If you have been exposed, monitor for:

- Cramps or pain in the lower abdomen
- Bleeding between regular periods
- Pain when passing urine
- Bleeding or pain during or after sex
- A change in vaginal discharge
- A discharge from the penis
- Pain when passing urine
- Swollen and sore testicles
- Anal pain or discharge

Seek medical attention if you have any of the above symptoms and think you have been exposed.

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information
on Chlamydia
contact
NSW Sexual
Health
Infolink on
1800 451 624

