

CHLAMYDIA

Chlamydia is a common sexually transmitted infection (STI). If it is not treated, chlamydia can cause fertility problems in people with a uterus. The good news is that chlamydia is easy to treat—but most people with chlamydia do not know they have it. If you have had sex, you may need to be tested, even if you feel healthy.

Why Chlamydia is Dangerous

Chlamydia can be very harmful to people with a uterus. Left untreated, the infection can spread up to the fallopian tubes and can scar the tubes and prevent future pregnancy. It can also lead to a pregnancy outside the uterus—called an ectopic or extrauterine pregnancy—that can be life-threatening to the pregnant person.

Symptoms of Chlamydia

Most people infected with chlamydia will have no symptoms. If symptoms do occur, they may be like the symptoms of other STIs. Because chlamydia is very common and often has no symptoms, people who have had sex should think about being tested. If symptoms do occur, they may be like the symptoms of other STIs

Symptoms may include:

- vaginal discharge
- pain or burning sensation during urination
- pus (thick yellow-white fluid) or watery or milky discharge from the penis
- pain or swelling of the testicle

If the infection spreads to the fallopian tubes, a person may experience

- lower abdominal and lower back pain
- pain during intercourse
- bleeding between menstrual periods
- nausea or fever

OVERVIEW

- Chlamydia is a common sexually transmitted infection.
- Chlamydia can be easily treated and cured with antibiotics.
- Left untreated, chlamydia can cause additional health problems.
- Many people with chlamydia will have no symptoms, so getting tested is the only way to know if you are infected.

Getting Tested

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend sexually active women age 25 or younger get tested once per year. Chlamydia testing is also recommended for women with new or multiple sexual partners and pregnant women.

There are many ways to test for chlamydia. One kind of test uses a sample of urine (pee). Other tests use a swab to collect a small amount of fluid from a penis, cervix, or vagina. The swab tests of the cervix or vagina may feel the same as a Pap test in the way the sample is taken, but a Pap test is not the same as a chlamydia test.

Talking to Your Healthcare Provider

Don't be afraid to speak openly about your sex life with your healthcare provider, as you can get the best care by having an honest discussion.

You can start the conversation with something like: *"I've had sex with someone new, and haven't been using condoms every time. Should I be tested for STIs?"* or *"I think my partner had sex with someone else. I want to be tested for STIs."*

Treatment

Chlamydia can be treated and cured with antibiotics. Early treatment can prevent lasting damage to your body. While you are being treated:

- Never share your medicine with anyone.
- Be sure to take all of your medicine—even if your symptoms go away.
- Make sure your partner(s) get treated.
- Avoid sex until you and your partner finish treatment. If you're treated with a single dose of medicine, don't have sex for one week afterwards.

Telling Your partner

Tell anyone you have sex with right away if you find out you have chlamydia. They should also be treated—even if they have no symptoms. If they are not treated, they may also give chlamydia back to you or to someone else.

Sometimes, telling a partner can be difficult. But keep in mind most people with chlamydia do not know they have it. Don't let fear or anger stop you from communicating. You could say something like: *"This isn't easy for me, but I care about you and need to tell you something. I went to the doctor and found out I have chlamydia. Since we have had sex, you might have it too, event if you don't have any symptoms. You need to get tested."*

If You Are Pregnant

A pregnant person can give chlamydia to their baby during birth. Chlamydia can cause eye, ear

and lung infections in a newborn. The good news is that a pregnant person can take medicine to cure chlamydia and protect their baby. Make sure your provider knows if you are pregnant or nursing, as they will prescribe a treatment that is safe for your baby.

Staying Healthy

You can protect yourself from chlamydia in the same ways you protect yourself from other STIs.

- Talk to your partner about safer sex and how you can protect yourselves against STIs.
- Have condoms on hand, and be ready to use them. Use a condom when you have vaginal, anal and oral sex, or any genital-to-genital or genital-to-anal contact.
- Get tested—and bring your partner with you to get tested too.
- If you have any symptoms of an STI or have a sexual partner that was diagnosed, go to your healthcare provider or clinic as soon as possible. YesMeansTest.org has a clinic finder if you need help locating a provider.

Learn More

Learn more about chlamydia and other STIs from the American Sexual Health Association, a trusted nonprofit organization that has advocated on behalf of those at risk for STIs for more than a century. Our websites include:

www.ashasexualhealth.org

www.iwannaknow.org

www.quierosaber.org

www.nccc-online.org

www.askexpertsnow.com

www.YESmeansTEST.org

