

What is Chlamydia?

- *Chlamydia trachomatis* is a common sexually transmitted bacterial infection.
- In males it infects the urethra (tube inside the penis) and in women it infects the urethra and cervix (neck of the womb).
- It can also infect the rectum and sometimes the eyes and throat.

How does someone get Chlamydia?

- Chlamydia is transmitted through contact with genital fluids from the penis and vagina.
- If you have vaginal sex or anal sex without a condom you may become infected. Sometimes oral sex can transmit the bacteria.
- Other sexual practices such as mutual masturbation or fingering may also result in the spread of infection.
- Chlamydia can be passed from mother to baby during birth. The baby may develop an eye or lung infection as a result.

What are the symptoms?

- Many people do not develop any symptoms from a Chlamydia infection.
- It can remain for months or even years if it is not treated.
- Chlamydia can be transmitted to others whether a person has symptoms or not.
- **Symptoms for Men can include:**
 - Soreness or redness at the opening of the penis.
 - Discomfort when passing urine.
 - Clear or whitish discharge from the penis.
- If not treated, chlamydia can spread to the testicles, leading to pain and swelling.
- It may occasionally cause infertility in men.
- Sometimes a condition called SARA (Sexually Acquired Reactive Arthritis) occurs, causing inflammation of eyes, skin and joints.
- Many men do not have any symptoms.
- **Symptoms for Women can include:**
 - Unusual vaginal discharge.
 - Unusual vaginal bleeding, especially after sex.
 - Lower abdominal pain, including pain during sexual intercourse.
 - Discomfort when passing urine.
- Most women do not have any symptoms.
- If not treated, Chlamydia may spread into the uterus (womb) and tubes resulting in Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), a condition that may cause infertility.
- **Both men and women** can have infection with Chlamydia in the rectum if they have anal sex. This may cause rectal discharge or discomfort, but often no symptoms occur.
- Chlamydia infection of the throat may occur, but is uncommon and usually does not cause any symptoms.
- Women might need to have an examination if a full check-up is being done but sometimes just a self-collected vaginal swab is enough.
- Men need to give a urine sample to test for Chlamydia.
- If rectal infection is suspected, a swab can be taken or self-collected from just inside the anus.

Chlamydia

How do I know if I have Chlamydia?

- The best way to find out if you have Chlamydia is to have a sexual health check-up.

How is Chlamydia treated?

- Chlamydia is easily treated with antibiotic tablets.
- This may be a 7-day course or a single dose treatment.
- It is important to finish all the antibiotics; otherwise the infection may not be properly treated.

Does my partner need treatment?

- If you have had sex without a condom with your sexual partner(s) it is very likely that they are infected with Chlamydia.
- It is important that they have a sexual health check-up and treatment for Chlamydia even if they have no symptoms and even if they have a negative Chlamydia test.

Important advice for someone infected with Chlamydia?

- Finish all the antibiotics – symptoms may resolve in a few days but the bacteria may still be there.
- Sexual intercourse without a condom during treatment should be avoided because the infection can still be transmitted.
- If you receive single dose therapy you should avoid sex without a condom for 7 days after treatment and until 7 days after your partner(s) have been treated.
- We recommend you have a Chlamydia test as part of a sexual health check-up 3 months after you have completed treatment (or 6 weeks later if you are pregnant) to check you have not been re-infected.



The facts about **Chlamydia**

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