

Chlamydia

What is it?

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) that is passed on through sex. It is caused by bacteria. Most people don't have symptoms but can still pass it on.

Chlamydia can infect the:

- The urine passage (urethra)
- The neck of the womb (cervix)
- Bottom (anus)
- Throat
- Eyes

If you don't treat chlamydia it can have serious effects on your health into the future.

How do I know if I have it?

You can have chlamydia without knowing they have it. Most people won't have symptoms but symptoms can start from 2 to 14 days after infection.

Symptoms can include:

- Pain when peeing
- Bleeding or pain during or after sex
- Bleeding between periods
- Unusual discharge from your vagina
- Cramps or pain in the lower abdomen, below the stomach
- Bottom pain or discharge
- Eye infections
- Discharge from the penis
- Swollen and sore balls (testes)

Discharge may be clear or cloudy, thick or thin, bloody, white, yellow or green. Discharge may have a bad odour or no odour.

The health effects for untreated chlamydia include:

Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) when the reproductive organs become inflamed.

Ongoing pelvic pain

Difficulty getting pregnant

Pregnancy outside of the uterus (ectopic pregnancy)

Sore and swollen joints

Eye infections

Swelling of the urine passage

Swelling of the balls (testes)

How did I get it?

Chlamydia is passed on through any kind of sex, including oral sex.

A mother can pass it on to their baby during birth.

Chlamydia can be passed on even when you don't have any symptoms.

How can I make sure I don't get it?

Always use a condom and water based lubricant. Even if you use a condom you shouldn't have sex with someone who has had chlamydia until a week after they have finished the treatment. Go for a regular STI checks. This way you can find infections before they get complicated. It also helps stop the spread of STIs to others.

How do I test for it?

Chlamydia can be diagnosed by your doctor. A simple pee (urine) test and if you have a vagina you can also take a vaginal swab that you can do yourself. It is important not to go to the toilet for 20 minutes before the test. These tests are not painful.

How can I get rid of it?

Easily with one course of antibiotics.

If you have chlamydia it is important to have another test in 3 months after your treatment to make sure you have not been re-infected.

Who do I need to tell and why?

It is important to tell people you have had sex with about chlamydia. They will need to be tested and treated. Ask your doctor if you aren't sure who you need to tell. They can help you with this and help you contact them.

This fact sheet is just some general information. If you are worried about your health go and see a doctor.

For more information or support visit:

For more information on STIs and safe sex visit the Play Safe website:

www.playsafe.health.nsw.gov.au

Sexual Health Info Link is a service that you can call up for information on STIs and sexual health. It's anonymous and non-judgemental. Call: 1800 451 624 or visit <https://www.shil.nsw.gov.au/>

"Let them know" allows you to send an anonymous messages to tell someone you've had sex with that they have come into contact with the infection: <http://www.letthemknow.org.au/>