

*Lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV) is a rare sexually transmitted infection. Condom use helps to prevent transmission.*

## Lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV)

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### What is lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV)?

Lymphogranuloma venereum, or LGV, is a sexually transmissible infection caused by rare types of Chlamydia bacteria which infect the lymphatic system. LGV can cause genital lumps, rectal symptoms and swelling of the lymph glands in the groin.

### What are the symptoms?

LGV starts as a small painless lump or sore that appears on or in the penis, rectum, vagina, cervix (the neck of the womb) or mouth. This happens three to 30 days after exposure. The lump or sore heals after a few days and most people are not aware of it.

The infection spreads over the next two to six weeks to the lymph glands, usually in the groin, pelvis or rectum. Some people may also have fever, chills, weight loss, feel generally unwell or have sore muscles and joints. If the rectum is infected there can be a discharge of blood, pus or mucus, a painful urgent feeling of needing to pass a bowel motion but being unable to do so, diarrhoea or constipation, and lower abdominal pain.

In the final stages, the infection can cause widespread scarring and deformity in the affected area.

### How is it transmitted?

LGV is transmitted through anal, vaginal or oral sex.

If a mother is infected, her baby can become infected during birth.

There is a small risk of adult eye infection if infected fluid gets into the eyes.

LGV can be transmitted even when there are no symptoms.

### How is it prevented?

Using condoms and water based lubricant can significantly reduce the risk of transmission of LGV and other sexually transmissible infections.

Do not have sex with anyone, even using a condom, if they have visible symptoms or who has been diagnosed with LGV until after treatment is completed.

Go for a regular sexually transmissible infection (STI) check-up to find infections before complications develop and to prevent transmission to others. Always use condoms.

### How is it diagnosed?

LGV can be diagnosed by testing samples of fluid from the swollen lymph glands or taking a swab from an LGV lump or sore. Blood tests can also help to make a diagnosis. The diagnosis can sometimes be difficult because the disease is rare in Australia.

### **How is it treated?**

LGV is easily treated with antibiotics.

Painful swollen lymph nodes may need to be drained. Sometimes surgery is needed in later stages of the disease.

### **Telling partners**

If you have LGV it is important to tell your sexual partner so they can be tested and treated. Your doctor can help you decide who may be at risk and help you to contact them.

LGV is a notifiable disease. This means that doctors and laboratory staff are legally required to tell NSW Health about new cases. This information is confidential and is used for public health planning.

The information in this fact sheet is general and you should see a doctor if you are worried about your health.

### **Contact**

NSW Sexual Health Infoline freecall **1800 451 624**.