

Chlamydia

This fact sheet provides basic information only. It must not take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always talk to a healthcare professional about any health concerns you have, and before you make any changes to your diet, lifestyle or treatment.

What is Chlamydia?

Chlamydia is an infection caused by a germ or bacteria.

How is it spread?

Chlamydia is spread by having unprotected sex - not using a condom - with someone who is infected with chlamydia. An infected person can transmit chlamydia whether or not symptoms are present. An infected person is contagious until he or she has been treated. Most people with chlamydia do not know they have it as up to 50% of people have no symptoms (they have no changes with their body).

To find out if you have chlamydia, you must be examined by a doctor or nurse and have tests done.

What are the symptoms?

If symptoms appear, it is usually one to three weeks after sexual exposure to an infected person. Chlamydia may not cause symptoms until the infection has spread to other areas of the body.

For women, symptoms can include:

- A burning feeling when urinating;
- A change in periods or more painful periods;
- Bleeding or blood spotting from the vagina;
- Pain during sexual intercourse;
- Pain in the lower stomach area;
- Conjunctivitis or pink eye;
- The need to urinate more often; or
- A slight fever.

For men, symptoms can include:

- Abnormal fluid from the penis;
- An itching feeling inside the penis;
- Pain while urinating or a need to urinate more often; or
- Conjunctivitis or pink eye.

What are the complications?

Chlamydia causes no long-term problems if treated early during the infection. Untreated chlamydia can lead to complications.

In women, it can spread and cause infection in reproductive organs and other parts of the body. It can also cause pelvic inflammatory disease or PID in women.

Pregnant women may pass the infection to their baby's eyes during childbirth. This can cause (infection) irritation in the baby's eyes or lungs, and would need to be treated with antibiotics.

In men, complications can include infection in the urethra or the testicles or an inflammation of the prostate.

What is the treatment?

The treatment for chlamydia is antibiotic pills. Any person(s) you have had sex with within the previous two months (or longer) must also be tested and treated, whether they have symptoms or not. Follow up tests are recommended six months after treatment.

Important: *Do not have sex for 7 days after BOTH you and your partner(s) have finished taking the prescribed pills. Take all of the medication exactly as instructed.*

Should I be tested for other sexually transmitted infections (STIs)?

If you have different sexual partners, or if your partner has different partners, you should also be tested for other STIs including gonorrhea, syphilis and HIV (the virus linked to AIDS). You should also consider getting vaccine shots to prevent hepatitis B virus infection.

Please remember: *The more sexual partners you have, the higher your risk of getting a STI.*

Ways to reduce your risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection

- Have sex with only one partner who has been tested for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), who has been treated if necessary and who is having sex only with you. The more partners you have, the higher your risk of getting an STI.
- Use a female or male condom every time you have sex. Condoms offer protection against STIs, but they must be used properly.
- Have regular check-ups for STIs.
- Decide not to have sex.

Contact Information

For more information contact Yukon Communicable Disease Control at 667-8323. #4 Hospital Road, Whitehorse, Yukon

In the communities call toll-free 1-800-661-0408 extension 8323.

Adapted from BC HealthFiles