

What is Chlamydia?

Chlamydia is the most common bacterial sexually transmitted infection (STI) in Canada. It is caused by the bacterium *Chlamydia trachomatis*. The highest rates of infections are found in youth/young adults 15-24 years of age.

How is Chlamydia spread?

Chlamydia is spread through unprotected vaginal, anal and oral sex with an infected partner.

What are the symptoms?

Most people **do not** have symptoms. Chlamydia can affect the cervix and urethra and occasionally the rectum, throat and eye. Some people may experience the following symptoms two to six weeks after exposure:

- Discharge from vagina or penis
- Burning or pain when passing urine
- Pain during sex
- Bleeding between periods or after sex
- Lower stomach pain
- Burning or itching around tip of penis
- Pain in testicles

How is Chlamydia diagnosed?

- Swabs can be taken from the infected area (cervix, vagina, urethra, anus and throat)
- A urine sample can be taken
- Ask your health care provider to take a swab while a pap test is being performed

How is chlamydia treated?

Chlamydia is treated with a specific antibiotic that is prescribed by a doctor. It is important to take medication as directed. It is also important to not have sex (oral, anal and/or vaginal) for seven days after taking the medication. If you have unprotected sex with your partner(s) and they have not been treated, you can get infected again.

Follow-up

No immediate follow-up is needed.

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What about partners?

People who test positive for chlamydia are asked to tell all sexual partner(s) so they can be tested and/or treated. A Public Health Nurse is able to help contact sexual partners as needed.

Things to think about...

If left untreated, chlamydia infections can result in:

- Chlamydia may spread to uterus and fallopian tubes (Pelvic Inflammatory Disease).
- Risk of an ectopic (tubal) pregnancy.
- Difficulty becoming pregnant
- Chronic pelvic pain
- Reiters syndrome (Rashes, sores and joint pain)
- Pain in testicles
- Chlamydia is often associated with other undetected or untreated infections. Individuals infected with Chlamydia are at greater risk of acquiring and transmitting HIV.

How can I reduce my chances of getting and spreading Chlamydia?

- Avoid sex
- Using condoms or a dental dam **every time**, even if you are using another form of birth control
- Do not share sex toys

To reduce your risk of STIs, GET TESTED:

- After your last partner
- When starting a new relationship
- If the condom broke or after having unprotected sexual intercourse

To help protect against STIs, get vaccinated for hepatitis A, B and HPV

For more information, contact The Clinic at 519-663-5317.

Reference

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada
www.sexandu.ca

Last modified: February 2022

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