

Chlamydia is an infection caused by bacteria. It is the most commonly reported sexually transmitted disease (STD) in the United States.

# Chlamydia

## How is it spread?

Women get chlamydia through vaginal, oral, or anal sexual contact with an infected person.

## What are signs of chlamydia in women?

75% of infected women and 50% of infected men have no signs. Signs in women include:

- ◆ Increased or unusual vaginal discharge.
- ◆ Burning with urination.
- ◆ Pain in the back or abdomen.

- ◆ Nausea.
- ◆ Fever.
- ◆ Discomfort during sex.
- ◆ Bleeding between periods.
- ◆ Rectal pain, bleeding, or discharge.
- ◆ Sore throat.

**Most women with chlamydia do not show any signs of infection.**

### How do you know if you have chlamydia?

The only way to know if you have chlamydia is by a medical exam. Most women with chlamydia do not have any signs of infection. See your health care provider to be tested for chlamydia each year if you:

- ◆ Are age 25 or younger and are sexually active.
- ◆ Are older than 25 with new or multiple sex partners.
- ◆ Do not practice safe sex.
- ◆ Are having sex with someone who might be having sex with others.
- ◆ Are pregnant.

### How is it treated?

Chlamydia can be treated and cured with antibiotics. Always finish antibiotic treatment, even if signs of chlamydia go away. Do not have sex until after treatment and signs of it are gone. See your health care provider if your signs do not go away after finishing treatment.

### What can happen if you have chlamydia for a long time?

- ◆ Problems getting pregnant.
- ◆ Pregnancy outside of the uterus.
- ◆ Swelling in the anus.
- ◆ Eye and joint redness and pain.
- ◆ More likely to get HIV from a partner who is infected with HIV.

### If you have chlamydia:

- ◆ Always finish all antibiotic treatment.
- ◆ Do not have sex with someone who has chlamydia or has not finished treatment (to prevent re-infection).
- ◆ Tell current and recent sex partners of the infection so they can get checked.
- ◆ Know that it can raise the risk of getting and spreading HIV.



## How can you avoid chlamydia?

- ◆ Avoid sexual contact.
- ◆ Have safer sex:
  - Reduce the number of sexual partners.
  - Condoms, when used correctly, can reduce the risk of getting chlamydia. Each time you have sex use a condom (male or female type):
    - Before vaginal sex.
    - Before anal sex.
    - Before oral sex.
  - Have sex with only one partner who does not have sex with others and does not have chlamydia.
- ◆ Know that other forms of birth control do not protect against chlamydia.



## What about pregnancy?

**All pregnant women should be tested for chlamydia.** If you are pregnant and have chlamydia, you should discuss your pregnancy and infection with your health care provider. Pregnant women with chlamydia can have early births or babies with eye and lung infections.

**Pregnant women with chlamydia can pass it to their babies during childbirth.**

### For more on chlamydia see:

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):*

*Chlamydia – CDC Fact Sheet*

*[www.cdc.gov/std/chlamydia/stdfact-chlamydia.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/std/chlamydia/stdfact-chlamydia.htm)*

*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office on Women's Health:*

*Chlamydia fact sheet*

*[www.womenshealth.gov/faq/chlamydia.cfm](http://www.womenshealth.gov/faq/chlamydia.cfm)*

*U.S. National Library of Medicine:*

*Chlamydia infections in women*

*[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000660.htm](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000660.htm)*