

Chlamydia (*Chlamydia trachomatis*)

What is Chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a bacterial infection that can be transmitted through sexual contact.

- ◆ There are 4 million new cases of Chlamydia every year.
- ◆ More than 50% of all people with Chlamydia **have no symptoms**.
- ◆ Up to 80% of all women and 10% of all men with Chlamydia have absolutely no symptoms. Women can develop Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) as a result of undetected Chlamydia. PID is a serious infection that can lead to infertility. Chlamydia can make both men and women unable to have children.

Many people don't know they have Chlamydia so they don't get treated. Then they pass the Chlamydia to someone else during sex.

What are the symptoms of Chlamydia?

Women's symptoms may include:

- ◆ an unusual vaginal discharge
- ◆ painful and/or frequent urination
- ◆ a burning or painful sensation during intercourse
- ◆ abdominal pain
- ◆ irregular bleeding (spotting) between menstrual periods

Men's symptoms may include:

- ◆ watery-milky discharge from penis
- ◆ ache in testicles, abdomen, or bladder

But remember, many people have no symptoms at all!

How can I get it?

Chlamydia is transmitted through close intimate contact with an infected partner

- ◆ through vaginal sex
- ◆ through anal sex
- ◆ possibly through oral sex
- ◆ to children during birth

Chlamydia can be transmitted even if there are no visible symptoms!

Chlamydia can be present for months or even years before it is detected.

How can I prevent Chlamydia?

Chlamydia can be prevented through:

- ◆ practicing abstinence or monogamy (you and your partner only have sex with each other)
- ◆ using a latex condom (rubber) every time you have sex
- ◆ avoiding sex with partners who have any visible symptoms of an infection
- ◆ limiting your number of sexual partners

Am I at risk? Should I get tested?

If you do not use condoms every time, if you have had more than one sexual partner, or if your partner has ever had sex with someone else, it may be a good idea to be tested for Chlamydia. Chlamydia can be easily treated

with antibiotics once it is diagnosed, but **if you do not get tested you may not know that you have an infection.** You can be tested for Chlamydia during a physical exam. The Chlamydia test does not hurt. If Chlamydia is left untreated it can cause serious infections of your reproductive organs and may even prevent you from having children in the future.

What can I do to treat Chlamydia?

If you have been diagnosed with Chlamydia you and your partner must take a prescribed antibiotic to treat the infection. *You and your partner must each have an appointment to be seen in the clinic for treatment.*

What medication will be prescribed?

_____ **Vibramycin (doxycycline) 100 mg.** may be given to you to take at home. Take one pill in the morning and one in the evening for seven days.

- ◆ Take on an empty stomach at least one hour before or two hours after meals.
- ◆ Avoid taking antacids (Rolaids, Mylanta, etc.)
- ◆ You may be more sensitive to the sun and more likely to get sun burned.
- ◆ You should not take this drug if you are allergic to it or to tetracycline, or if you are pregnant.
- ◆ If you experience shortness of breath, hives or a rash, severe diarrhea, or vomiting, call Family Planning Services, an emergency care clinic, or your family doctor and stop taking your medication.
- ◆ **Doxycycline can decrease the effectiveness of birth controls pills.** To avoid pregnancy, use another form of birth control while you are taking the medication and for one week after finishing the prescription. You may also have breakthrough spotting.

_____ **Zithromax (azithromycin) 1gm.** may be given to you at the office. You should take it on an empty stomach so don't eat one hour before or two hours after taking the medicine.

- ◆ Side effects include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain.
- ◆ You should not take this medicine if you are allergic to erythromycin.

Call your clinician if you have severe side effects from any of the medicine or if you vomit within one hour of taking the medicine.

Should my partner be treated?

Yes. If your culture has come back positive, your partner is assumed to be positive as well and needs to be treated.

It is essential that your partner be treated so that you do not get re-infected with Chlamydia. **It is very important to abstain from sex while you and/or your partner are being treated and for at least one week (7 days) after finishing the medication.**
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*******You should be tested again in three months. *******

For more information visit:

American Social Health Association at <http://www.ashastd.org/>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov/std/>