

Chlamydia

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. 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, urethra, anus or 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 an antibiotic that is prescribed by a doctor. It is important to take the 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. Testing is recommended if you are between the ages of 15-24, if you have a new partner, or if you have unprotected sex (without condoms or a dental dam).

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 not treated, 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
- Pelvic pain
- Reiter's 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, before every new partner
- After unprotected sex, injection drug use, snorting or crack pipes
- To help prevent STIs, get vaccinated against hepatitis A, B, and HPV.

For more information

Please contact The Clinic at 519-663-5446.

References

¹Canadian Federation for Sexual Health Retrieved from

http://www.cfsh.ca/Your_Sexual_Health/STIs-and-HIV/

²The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada Retrieved from

<http://www.sexualityandu.ca>

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