
▶ **What is chlamydia?**

- Chlamydia is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI). It is caused by the bacterium *chlamydia trachomatis*.

▶ **How is chlamydia spread?**

- Spread during unprotected vaginal, oral, or anal sex with an infected person
- Spread by infected body fluid that comes in contact with your eyes, either directly or spread by hand

Chlamydia can also be passed from mother to baby during childbirth.

▶ **How can I tell if I have chlamydia?**

Many people who have chlamydia have no signs of infection. You can pass it to someone else without even knowing it.

Men might notice one or more of the following:

- discharge from the penis
- burning feeling when you pee
- pain in the testicles
- burning and/or itching at end of the penis

Women might notice one or more of the following:

- an unusual vaginal discharge
- a burning feeling when you pee
- pain in the lower abdomen
- abnormal vaginal bleeding e.g. between periods, during or after having sex
- pain during sex

In both men and women:

- With an oral infection – you may have no symptoms.

- With an anal infection- you may have symptoms such as pain, bleeding and discharge.
- Rarely chlamydia may affect the eye and cause redness and discharge

▶ **How do I get tested for chlamydia?**

Men and women are tested by giving a urine sample or by having a swab taken from the affected area.

For the urine test, it is important not to pee for two hours before the test is taken.

Testing for gonorrhoea can be done at the same time.

▶ **How is chlamydia treated?**

It is treated easily with an antibiotic prescribed by your health care provider.

It is important to:

- treat chlamydia to avoid serious infection, re-infection, complications and spread to others
- take and finish all the medication
- abstain from unprotected vaginal, oral or anal sex until treatment of partners is complete (i.e. after completion of a multiple-dose treatment or for seven days after single-dose therapy)

▶ **Is follow-up necessary?**

You may need follow-up if:

- you vomited the medication
- there is a chance you were re-infected
- you are pregnant
- your symptoms did not go away

If you tested positive:

A public health nurse will call you to talk about:

- treatment and prevention
- partner notification

- the recommendation to have repeat testing in six months

▶ **How do I protect myself and others?**

Talk with your partner and make informed decisions BEFORE having sex and plan to:

- abstain or limit your number of sex partners
- ask your partners to be tested before you have sex
- always use condoms or barriers for vaginal, oral and anal sex
- get an STI check-up—especially if either of you have had more than one sex partner or think you have an infection
- consider the effect that alcohol and drug use can have on sexual decision-making
- Consider getting immunized for STIs such as hepatitis B and Human Papillomavirus (HPV).

▶ **Are there any special concerns about chlamydia?**

- Because there are often no symptoms, you may not seek medical attention. If the infection is not treated you may develop serious health problems.
- Chlamydia can increase the risk of getting HIV

For women:

- The infection can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), causing pain and increasing the risk of scarring in the fallopian tubes which can lead to tubal (ectopic) pregnancy and/or infertility
- If you are pregnant with untreated chlamydia your baby could get severe eye or lung infections

For Men:

The infection can:

- cause pain and swelling in the testicles
- occasionally cause sterility

For both men and women:

- Untreated chlamydia can spread to your joints and cause arthritis (called Reiter's syndrome).

▶ ***Who can I talk to if I have more questions?***

If you have concerns or questions, call and ask for Sexual Health, or visit the health unit website below.



**simcoe
muskoka**
DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

Tel: 705-721-7520
Toll free: 1-877-721-7520
www.simcoemuskokahealth.org

▶ **References**

[Canadian Guidelines for Sexually Transmitted Infections](#)

Updated August 2015

Chlamydia

