



## Factsheet: Chlamydia

### What is Chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a bacterial infection. It is one of the most common and curable STIs.

### How is it transmitted?

Chlamydia can be found in semen, vaginal fluids and rectal secretions, and in the throat. It can be transmitted through:

- Unprotected vaginal, anal, and oral sex (note: ejaculation does not have to happen).
- Mother to Child transmission (during childbirth).
- Intimate/close genital contact.

### What are the symptoms?

A person can have Chlamydia and not have any symptoms.

Chlamydia is often referred to as '*The Silent Infection*', because most women with chlamydia, and about half of men, will not experience any symptoms.

As symptoms may not be present, the only way to know if a person has a chlamydia infection is to get tested.

If a person does have symptoms they will usually develop within one to three weeks after infection.

Symptoms can include:

- Inflammation of the rectum/anus, vagina or urethra.
- Burning/discomfort when weeing/urinating.
- Whitish discharge.
- Men – swelling of the testicles.
- Women – bleeding between periods or after penetrative sex.

### The Chlamydia Test:

The test for Chlamydia includes a urine test and/or by taking a swab from the infected area.

### How is it treated?

Chlamydia can be treated and cured with specific antibiotics.

If Chlamydia is left untreated, it can sometimes lead to other medical issues and complications such as PID (Pelvic Inflammatory Disease) and infertility in men and women.

Following treatment for Chlamydia, a person can be re-infected if they are exposed to that STI again.



**Prevention:**

- When sexually active, always use condoms and/or dental dams for vaginal, anal and oral sex.
- Get tested, and treated if required.
- Do not share sex toys, [or if toys are shared, use condoms on the sex toy, change the condom between people, remove it after use, and thoroughly clean the toy before using it again].
- When using fingers or hands for penetration (anally and/or vaginally), use latex gloves or finger cots, particularly if there are visible cuts or broken skin on the hands, and do not share fingers (i.e. do not use fingers on yourself that you have already used on your partner where infected fluids could be passed on).
- Make informed decisions: talk to sexual partner(s) about STI testing and using condoms, and get informed about the risks.
- Mutual monogamy (both partners test for STIs and don't have any, and both partners agree to only have sex with each other, and keep it that way!).

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