

Chlamydia

What is chlamydia?

Chlamydia (*kluh-mid-ee-uh*) is a common, sexually transmitted infection (STI). It is spread by any sexual contact with an infected person. It can damage the reproductive organs of men and women.

Lab tests are used to diagnose chlamydia.

What are the symptoms?

Chlamydia is known as a "silent" disease because about three-quarters of infected women and 50% of infected men have no symptoms. If symptoms appear, it is usually within 1-3 weeks after exposure.

Men

Some may experience pain during urination and a discharge from the penis.

Women

Symptoms are usually mild or absent but serious problems including infertility can happen before a woman knows there is a problem.

Some females may have a vaginal discharge, lower abdominal pain, abnormal vaginal bleeding in the middle of a menstrual cycle or after intercourse or pain deep inside during sex.

What can it do to me?

Women

Untreated chlamydia can cause Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), a serious infection of the reproductive organs. This can cause sterility, as well as other serious problems. Early diagnosis and treatment can prevent complications.

Men

Men with symptoms might have a discharge from their penis or a burning sensation when urinating. Men may have burning and itching around the opening of the penis. Pain and swelling in the testicles are uncommon. Men rarely become sterile from chlamydia.

Could I give it to others?

The greater the number of sex partners, the greater the risk of infection. Chlamydia can be spread during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Men who have sex with men are also at risk. Chlamydia can also be passed from an infected mother to her baby during vaginal childbirth.

You can spread the disease from the moment you pick it up. Since most females do not have early symptoms it is difficult to know if, or when, you have given it to others.

If you have an infection, inform your partner(s) and get treated as soon as possible. If you do not feel comfortable telling your sex partner(s), a public health nurse will help contact them for you. Your name will not be revealed.

How is it treated?

Chlamydia is easily treated and cured with certain antibiotics. Follow the instructions. The infection will not be cured until all the pills have been taken. Penicillin will not cure chlamydia.

Does the treatment work?

Yes, but the only way to be sure is to have a follow-up test after the treatment has been completed. Females should have another test 1 month after finishing the medication, preferably after her next period. Males should also be retested in 1 month.

When can I have sex again?

You should have sex again only when your test is negative and your partner(s) is free of infection. Avoid sex while taking the medication.

Prevention

The best ways to avoid an STI are to abstain from sexual contact. If you have sex, always use a latex condom.

For more information contact Community Health Services Department at 519 383-8331 or toll free 1-800-667-1839.



COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Environmental Health & Prevention Services

160 Exmouth Street
Point Edward, Ontario N7T 7Z6
Telephone: 519 383-8331
Toll free: 1-800-667-1839
Fax: 519 383-7092
Email: chsd@county-lambton.on.ca
www.lambtonhealth.on.ca

Revised 04.19.2010

