

WHAT IS CHLAMYDIA?

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by bacteria called Chlamydia Trachomatis. It can be spread to your penis, vagina, anus, throat or eyes.

It is the most common curable (bacterial) STI in the United States, and it is especially common among teens and in Minneapolis. One of the reasons that it is so common is that it usually has no symptoms. In women, untreated Chlamydia can increase the risk of infertility and in men it can cause sterility. In women it can also cause P.I.D. (pelvic inflammatory disease), which is painful and dangerous. Chlamydia can also cause, tubal pregnancies, stillbirths and premature births. For both men and women, it can lead to arthritis and heart problems.

If you have an STI you must inform anyone you have had sex with recently so they can get tested and treated.

HOW IS CHLAMYDIA SPREAD?

Chlamydia is spread through vaginal, oral and anal sex. It can also be spread to an infant during childbirth from an infected mother which may cause blindness in the newborn. Occasionally, it can be spread from the genitals to your eyes by your hands.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CHLAMYDIA?

Chlamydia usually does not have symptoms or the symptoms may be too mild to notice. Symptoms may include:

FOR WOMEN:

- ✘ Frequency or burning when peeing.
- ✘ Irregular periods or bleeding.
- ✘ Pelvic or low abdominal pain, especially during sex.
- ✘ Unusual vaginal discharge.
- ✘ Vaginal swelling or tenderness.

FOR MEN:

- ✘ Unusual discharge from penis.
- ✘ Pain while peeing.
- ✘ Testicular pain.
- ✘ Pain or itching around the urethra (opening of the penis).

FOR BOTH WOMEN AND MEN:

- ✘ A mild sore throat or swollen glands in your neck.
- ✘ Rectal itching and/or discharge.
- ✘ Mucous in your stools and/or diarrhea
- ✘ Achy, stiff joints.
- ✘ Red itchy eyes, and possibly a discharge from them.

PREVENTION!

Since so few people have symptoms, it can be hard to know if your partner is infected. It only takes having unprotected sex **once** to get it. Using a condom correctly **EVERY SINGLE TIME YOU HAVE SEX** will greatly reduce your chances of becoming infected with Chlamydia or any other STI. Abstaining from any type of sex is the only 100% effective way to not get an infection. Also, reducing the number of people you have sex with, knowing your partner and talking to your partners about STI's before you have sex will help reduce your chances of becoming infected. Getting yourself and your partner tested regularly will help you get treated if you do become infected.

TESTING

People who don't know that they are infected often spread the disease unknowingly. The only way to know for sure if you have Chlamydia is to be tested at a clinic. A urine test is used for men at the Annex. A tiny swab is used to collect a small amount of fluid in the vagina for women. A swab can also be used for the anus or throat. You don't need to have symptoms for the test to be accurate.

HOW IS IT TREATED?

Chlamydia is 100% curable with the proper treatment. At the Annex we have different medications to treat Chlamydia for a small fee. Please don't let a lack of money prevent you or your partner from getting treatment. We can usually give you the medicine here, but if the infection is really severe, you may have to go to the hospital.

IF YOU THINK YOU MIGHT HAVE CHLAMYDIA!

- ✘ Come in for testing and treatment as soon as possible.
- ✘ Take all medication given to you. The infection may return if you don't.
- ✘ Tell all of your sexual partner(s): they must be treated even if they don't have symptoms. You can pass the infection back and forth if you both are not treated at the same time.
- ✘ Don't have sex for two weeks after treatment; otherwise you may pass on the infection. If you do have sex, use condoms.
- ✘ ***Ladies: if you are on birth control pills or the patch use a back up method during treatment.***
- ✘ If you are sexually active, get tested for STI's at least once a year.

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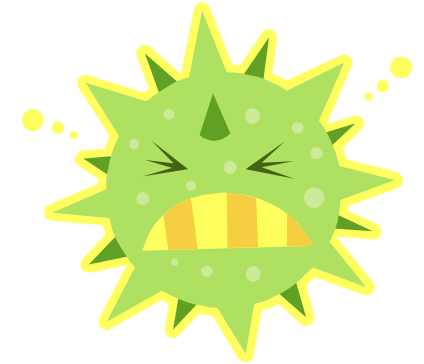
CALL ABOUT AN APPOINTMENT OR FOR MORE INFORMATION



763-533-1316

You can also call the MN Family Planning and SDI Hotline
1-800-THE-FACTS
or the National STI Info Line
1-800-227-8922

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