



## BASIC INFORMATION

### DESCRIPTION

Chlamydia is a bacterial infection that mainly affects the genitals of men and women. It is the most common reported bacterial sexually transmitted disease (STD) in the United States. It can develop in anyone who is sexually active. It affects females more often than males.

### FREQUENT SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- There are often no symptoms during the early stages.
- Vaginal discharge in women.
- Bleeding may occur between menstrual periods.
- Pain when urinating.
- Penis discharge in males.
- Men may have scrotal discomfort or burning or itching around opening of the penis.
- Genital, lower abdominal, or back discomfort or pain.
- Painful sexual intercourse in females.
- Infection in the rectum may cause rectal pain, discharge, or bleeding.

### CAUSES

- *Chlamydia trachomatis* bacteria. Symptoms may appear 1 to 3 weeks after exposure. It is spread by:
  - Vaginal sexual intercourse.
  - Anal sexual intercourse.
  - Oral-genital contact.
  - Vaginal infection during delivery of a newborn, which may infect the newborn's eyes or lungs.

### RISK INCREASES WITH

- Sexually active men and women.
- Unprotected sex, especially in young females.
- Having other sexually transmitted diseases.
- New or multiple sex partners.

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Abstain from sex, have one sexual partner, or limit the number of sexual partners. Use condoms for sexual activity to help reduce risk of infections.
- Talk to your health care provider about screening for chlamydia and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- Women should avoid douching.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Complete cure with adequate antibiotic treatment.

### POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Because the infection often has no symptoms, complications in a woman can occur even before she knows there is a problem.
- If untreated, the infection can cause:
  - Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) in women (uterus and fallopian tubes become infected). It may result in infertility, chronic pelvic pain, and ectopic pregnancy.

- Higher risk for HIV infection or cervical cancer in women.

- Epididymitis in men.

- Rarely, Reiter's syndrome (a type of arthritis).



## DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

### GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider may do a physical exam of the genital area. Medical tests can include urine tests or studies of the discharge from the cervix or penis. A Pap test or pregnancy test may be done in women. Testing for other sexually transmitted diseases is usually recommended.
- Treatment is with antibiotic drugs. All sexual partners must be treated.
- To learn more: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; website: [www.cdc.gov/std](http://www.cdc.gov/std) or American Social Health Association, PO Box 13827, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709; hotline (800) 227-8922; website: [www.ashastd.org](http://www.ashastd.org).

### MEDICATION

The infection is treated with an oral antibiotic. It may be a single dose or taken as a daily dose for 7 days.

### ACTIVITY

Avoid sexual relations until you and your sexual partner have been treated. This is usually 7 days after a single dose treatment or after completing a 7 day treatment (or as advised). A woman is at risk for re-infection if her sexual partner is untreated.

### DIET

No special diet.



## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of chlamydial infection.
- Symptoms last longer than one week or get worse.
- Unusual vaginal bleeding or swelling develops.
- New, unexplained symptoms develop. Drugs used in treatment may produce side effects.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page ☐