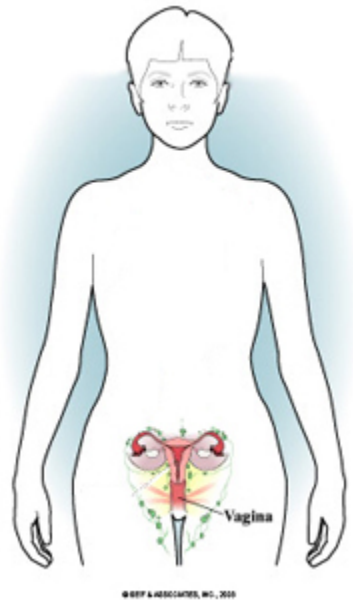
Chlamydia, Sexually Transmitted Disease, STD

Chlamydia is a disease caused by germs (bacteria) caught during sex. An infected person spreads chlamydia to another person during vaginal, anal, or oral sex (hooking up in **any way**). This STD can be in the cervix, penis, throat, or rear end (*rectum*). Both men and women can get and spread it. It is one of the most common STD's. It can cause serious problems if it is not treated. A woman can pass it to her baby during birth.



SYMPTOMS

Many people have no symptoms and do not know that they have this STD. You can have some or all of these symptoms. Symptoms usually start from 1 week to 3 weeks after exposure.

If you are a woman you may have:

- Vaginal discharge that is pus-like, pale yellow, or white. It may smell bad.
- Itching around your vagina.
- Bleeding during sex or between menstrual periods.
- Pain during sex.
- Pain in the lower part of your belly (*abdomen*).
- Rectal discharge (if you had anal sex).
- A need to pee (*urinate*) more than usual.
- A burning feeling when you pee.

If you are a man you may have:

- Itching or a stinging feeling at the tip of your penis.
- A milky, pus-like drainage from your penis.
- Pain and swelling of your balls (*testicles*).
- Rectal discharge (if you had anal sex).
- A need to pee more than usual.
- A burning feeling when you pee.

Do not have sex again until you have been checked and treated and know the infection is cured.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Your doctor will have you take antibiotics to get rid of the infection. It is very important that you take all the pills you are given. **Do not** stop them even if you start to feel better.
- Your sex partner(s) must also take antibiotics to get rid of the infection. You can get the infection again if you have sex with a partner who has not gotten rid of the infection.
- **Do not** have sex until you have finished taking all of your antibiotics.
- **Do not** have sex until you have been checked again to make sure the infection is gone.

WHAT HAPPENS IF CHLAMYDIA IS NOT TREATED?

If you are a woman:

- You can have Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID). This can cause pain in your lower belly (*abdomen*). PID can damage the parts of your body that are needed for having a baby. You may not be able to get pregnant.
- If you are able to get pregnant, this infection can cause the baby to grow outside of your uterus.
- Your baby can get the chlamydia infection. He or she may be born with the infection in his or her eyes or lungs. This can cause blindness, other eye problems, and/or lung problems.
- Chlamydia can cause your baby to be born with birth defects.
- Your baby might be born too early or may be born dead.

If you are a man:

- This infection can spread inside the tube that carries sperm (*semen*) from your balls to your penis. This may cause pain. Sometimes, this makes you not able to have children.

HOW TO KEEP FROM GETTING CHLAMYDIA

- Use condoms (and spermicidal foam) every time you have sex.
- A woman who is less than 25 years old and is having sex should get checked at least once a year.
- A woman over 25 should get checked if she has more than 1 sex partner.
- **Do not** have sex with any man who has a milky discharge from his penis.
- **Do not** have sex with anyone who has a burning feeling while peeing (*urination*).

GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:

- You notice a type of discharge, rash, or sore that is not usual for you on your sex organs.
- You have a burning feeling when you pee.
- You have abdominal pain.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

Easy-to-Read style based on content from Parkland Health & Hospital System, Dallas, Texas

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