



CHLAMYDIA INFECTION

What is chlamydia?

Genital chlamydia is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections (STI). It is caused by the bacterium (a germ) *Chlamydia trachomatis*.

What are the symptoms of chlamydia?

Most people do not have symptoms and are unaware of their condition. If present, symptoms may include:

Females	Males
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an unusual discharge from the vagina • a burning feeling when urinating (peeing) • a change in periods • pain during sex or blood spotting after sex • pain in lower abdomen (belly) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an unusual discharge from the penis • a burning feeling when urinating (peeing) • burning or itching inside the penis • pain in the testicles

The bacteria causing chlamydia infection may also be found in other body parts including the throat and rectum.

How is chlamydia spread?

Chlamydia, with or without symptoms, is spread by having unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sex with an infected partner. It can be passed from mother to child during childbirth. If you have chlamydia, you should notify everyone you have had sex with in the past 60 days. If you have not had sex in the past 60 days, you should contact the last person you had sex with.

How is chlamydia diagnosed?

- Testing for chlamydia can be done with a urine test or through swabbing; a swab from the cervix (in females) and urethra (in males).
- Your health care provider will ask you questions about your past health and your sexual history.
- You should be retested for chlamydia 6 months after your diagnosis or according to your health care provider's recommendation.
- You should also be tested for other sexually transmitted and blood borne infections.

How is chlamydia treated?

- Chlamydia can be treated with antibiotics. You are contagious until you have been treated.
- Take all the pills exactly as instructed.
- Avoid unprotected sexual activities that may put you at risk for re-infection until you and your partner(s) have completed treatment.
- Be sure to follow your healthcare professional's treatment and follow-up recommendations.

What happens if chlamydia is left untreated?

- In women, untreated chlamydia can spread to reproductive organs and cause Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID). PID is a serious infection of the uterus (womb), fallopian tubes, and ovaries causing lower abdominal pain. It can lead to ectopic pregnancy and infertility (the inability to have children).
- A pregnant woman with chlamydia may have a miscarriage. She could also pass chlamydia to her baby during childbirth causing an eye infection or pneumonia.
- In men, untreated chlamydia can cause swelling and pain in the testicles and an inflammation of the prostate. It can also create scar tissue in the tubes that carry sperm and can cause sterility (the inability to produce sperm).
- People who have chlamydia may be more likely to become infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).
- People who have both HIV and chlamydia are more likely to spread HIV to others.

Who is at risk of getting chlamydia?

You are at greater risk of getting chlamydia if you:

- Are younger than 25 and sexually active with many partners.
- Have unprotected sex (vaginal, oral or anal) with an infected partner.
- Have sex with a sex worker.
- Have ever had an STI.

How can chlamydia be prevented?

Individuals who are sexually active should:

- Limit the number of sexual partners and avoid sex with people whose sexual history is unknown.
- Always use condoms when having sex (vaginal, oral, or anal). A dental dam (a sheet of latex) or a male condom cut open should be used for oral sex.
- Avoid the use of alcohol and other drugs that might cloud thinking and lead to high-risk behavior.

What is the public health response?

If you are diagnosed with chlamydia, your health-care provider will treat you and give you information on sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections. A Public Health nurse may contact you to support you in contacting your partners.

All discussions are strictly confidential.

Further Information

For additional information, contact your health-care provider, Tele-Care 811, local Public Health office or visit the [government of New Brunswick website](#).