

For Teens: What You Should Know About Chlamydia



Chlamydia is a disease spread through sex. It's common among young adults. Chlamydia is easy to treat, but you need the right medicine. You must get treated by a healthcare provider or clinic.

We understand gender is a spectrum. We may use gendered terms to talk about anatomy and health risk. Please use this information in a way that works best for you and your provider as you talk about your care.

Chlamydia may have no signs

Be aware of the following:

- Most people have no signs early on. They don't even know they have this disease. They may find out later when they have spread it to someone else. Or they may find out if they have complications such as being unable to have children.
- Some people do have signs. You may have discharge from the penis, vagina, or rectum. You may have burning during urination or pain in the sex organs or rectum. Chlamydia in the vagina or rectum could cause bleeding.
- For women, chlamydia can lead to bleeding between periods. It can cause vaginal or pelvic pain. In women, it can cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). PID can make it difficult or impossible to have children.
- For men, chlamydia can make the tip of the penis burn. It can make the testicles swell. Rarely it can cause men to be sterile.
- Usually the pain or the burning goes away in a few weeks, but the chlamydia remains and can cause long-term problems. These include infertility, rectal abscess, or chronic pain.
- Babies born to women with this disease can also get sick. The baby's lungs and eyes can be damaged.

Protect yourself from chlamydia

The safest way is to not have sex. If you have sex, be sure your partner doesn't have chlamydia. The best way to be sure is to get tested. Because of the risk for PID and problems chlamydia causes for newborns, experts advise screening (testing) for all sexually active females younger than 25. If you're not sure whether you or your partner has this disease, use a latex condom.

Stay sober. Getting high on alcohol or drugs can make you lose control. Then you may be more likely to have sex without using a condom.

Always use a condom

Don't make any exceptions to the following:

- Always use a new latex condom. Use one each time you have vaginal, oral, or anal sex.
- Latex male condoms and female condoms, used correctly and consistently, can reduce the risk of transmitting a sexually transmitted infection.
- Keep latex condoms on hand. Store them in a cool place. Don't keep them in your wallet or in your car.

Use condoms correctly

Using a latex condom right will help prevent the spread of chlamydia. If you use a lubricant, make sure it's water-based. Don't use petroleum jelly, oil, or hand cream. They can make the condom break.

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