

Chlamydia



Chlamydia is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI) in the U.S. An STI is also called a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Most people don't have symptoms. Because of this, chlamydia may not be noticed until it's passed to someone else or it causes severe problems. Left untreated, this infection may make it hard or impossible to have children.

Symptoms

Many people with chlamydia have no symptoms. People assigned female at birth are more likely to not have symptoms.

If they do have symptoms, they may include:

- Abnormal vaginal discharge
- Bleeding between periods
- Pain or burning during urination

If symptoms show up in people assigned male at birth, they include:

- Clear discharge (drip) from the penis
- Pain or burning during urination
- Rectal pain, discharge, or bleeding, especially in those who have anal sex

These symptoms often go away after a few weeks, with or without treatment. But if you are not treated, the chlamydia will still be there. It can cause long-term problems.

Potential problems

If the infection is not treated, it can lead to more serious health problems. In people assigned female at birth, this can be pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). PID can make it hard or even impossible to have a baby. It can also cause an ectopic (tubal) pregnancy. This type of pregnancy can't be carried to term. Symptoms of PID include fever, pain during sex, and pain in the belly. In people assigned male at birth, an untreated chlamydia infection can damage the testes. This can cause pain and scarring. This can possibly affect the ability to have children. Chlamydia of the rectal area can cause serious damage. This includes infection and holes (fistulas).

Screening

Experts advise yearly screening tests for sexually active people assigned female at birth who are younger than age 25. People at high risk, such as those who have many partners, should also be screened. Screening can help prevent problems like PID. Pregnant people should also be screened as part of prenatal care.

Treatment

Chlamydia can be treated when found early. It can be cured with antibiotics. If you have it, tell your partner right away. Because people often don't have symptoms, those diagnosed with chlamydia should ask their partners to get tested. In some places, a person with chlamydia may also be given treatment to give to their sexual partner.

Prevention



Know your partner's history. Protect yourself by using a latex condom whenever you have sex. If you are pregnant, take extra care to get correct treatment. Pregnant people with untreated chlamydia can pass the infection on to the baby. This can cause eye, ear, or lung problems in the baby. There is also the risk of a premature delivery.

To learn more

[American Sexual Health Association at www.ashasexualhealth.org/](http://www.ashasexualhealth.org/) or 919-361-8400

[CDC at www.cdc.gov/std](http://www.cdc.gov/std) or 800-232-4636

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