



Chlamydia

What is chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by the bacterium, *Chlamydia trachomatis*.

How is chlamydia spread?

Chlamydia is spread:

- Through anal, vaginal or oral sex with an infected person.
- From mother to baby (during birth).

Can you protect yourself from chlamydia?

Yes. The best ways to avoid chlamydia are to:

- Choose not to have sex (abstinence).
- Limit your number of sex partners.
- Use a latex condom correctly each time you have sex.
- Talk to your sex partners about chlamydia and other STIs.

What are the symptoms of chlamydia?

Most people have no symptoms. When symptoms are present, they will usually appear one to five weeks after sex with an infected person. Symptoms may include:

Females

Painful or more frequent urination
Fever/dull stomach ache or backache
Unusual discharge from vagina
Bleeding between periods

Males

Pain when urinating
Drip from penis

Men or women who have receptive anal sex or oral sex with an infected partner may become infected with chlamydia. The symptoms for anal chlamydia infection may include rectal bleeding, pain and discharge. Chlamydial infection of the throat due to oral sex with an infected partner usually has no symptoms.

You should call a health care provider or the Guilford County Department of Public Health right away if you have any of these symptoms or if you have had sex with someone who has chlamydia or has these symptoms. Since the symptoms of STIs often resemble one another, diagnosis by a health care provider is the only way to know for sure if you are infected.

Is chlamydia dangerous?

If untreated, chlamydial infections can cause serious reproductive and other health problems. Like the disease itself, the damage that chlamydia cause is often “silent.”

If you are a woman:

- Untreated infection can spread into the uterus or fallopian tubes and cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID).
- PID can cause permanent damage to the fallopian tubes, uterus and surrounding tissues. The damage can lead to chronic pelvic pain, infertility and potentially ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy outside the uterus).
- Women infected with chlamydia are up to five times more likely to become infected with HIV, if exposed.

If you are a man:

- Infection sometimes spreads to epididymis (the tube that carries sperm from the testis), which is known as epididymitis.
- Epididymitis can cause scrotal pain, swelling of the testicles, tenderness at the affect region and may lead to sterility.

Is there a cure for chlamydia?

Yes, antibiotics are used to treat and cure chlamydia.

Can you still have sex?

You should not have sex until:

- You have finished all of your prescribed medicine.
- Your sex partners have been treated and have finished all of their prescribed medicine.

Who can I call for more information?

American Social Health Association Hotline: 1-800-227-8922, or visit www.ashastd.org.

Guilford County Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Division, Greensboro or High Point: 336-641-7777, or visit www.myguilford.com.