



Chlamydia Fact Sheet

What is chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a common sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by the chlamydia bacterium (*Chlamydia trachomatis*). Chlamydia can damage a woman's reproductive organs. A woman with chlamydia that is untreated may not be able to get pregnant later on.

How does chlamydia spread?

Chlamydia can spread during sex, especially unprotected sex. Chlamydia can also be passed from a mom to her baby during childbirth.

What are the symptoms of chlamydia?

Chlamydia is called a "silent" disease because most infected people don't have symptoms.

How long does it take for symptoms to appear?

Most people infected with chlamydia (up to 80%) never develop symptoms. In those who do develop symptoms, it probably takes 7-14 days or longer.

How long can a person with chlamydial infection spread it to his or her partners?

People with infection can spread chlamydia until the infection is treated with the right medicine (antibiotics).

How does chlamydia affect a pregnant woman and her baby?

Babies who are born to moms with chlamydia can get infections in their eyes or lungs after birth.

How is chlamydia diagnosed?

Your health care provider can use laboratory tests to see if you have chlamydia. Some tests can be performed on urine, and other tests require a swab from inside the penis or inside the cervix.

What is the treatment for chlamydia?

If you have chlamydia, don't panic. Chlamydia can be treated (and cured!) with the right medicine (antibiotics). All of your sex partners should be evaluated, tested, and treated. You should avoid having sex until your sex partner(s) have been treated. If you have sex and your partner didn't get treated, you can get it again. Getting chlamydia or gonorrhea more than once can put women at risk for more serious medical problems, including not being able to get pregnant later on.

How can chlamydia be prevented?

You can avoid getting STDs in a couple of different ways. First, if you don't have sex, you can't get infected. But if you do have sex, you can reduce your risk of an STD by having one partner who is STD-free. Know your partner. Talk to your partner about condoms and preventing STDs/HIV and getting pregnant.

Get yourself tested for STDs if you are at risk. Anyone in Illinois who is 12 or older can get tested without their parents' consent.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends chlamydia testing to all women under 25 years of age who are having sex. Women who are older than 25 who have new partners or multiple partners should also get tested every year. All pregnant women should get tested for chlamydia.