

CHLAMYDIA

I. What is Chlamydia?

Chlamydia is the most common bacterial sexually transmitted disease in the United States. It is caused by the bacterium *Chlamydia Trachomatis*. Chlamydia, if left untreated, can lead to serious infection of the reproductive organs in both men and women. The disease can cause sterility or infertility. It may also increase a woman's risk of cervical cancer and ectopic pregnancy. If a mother has Chlamydia at the time of childbirth, her newborn baby's eyes and lungs can become infected, causing serious and permanent damage.

II. How is Chlamydia Transmitted?

Chlamydia is spread by sexual intercourse with an infected person or from an infected mother to her baby during birth.

III. Signs and Symptoms of Chlamydia

Many men and women can have Chlamydia but have no symptoms. Early symptoms may be mild and usually appear within 1-3 weeks after being infected. The disease can be passed on to a sexual partner even without any symptoms.

Symptoms in men:

- Discharge from penis
- Burning during urination
- Swollen and/or painful testicles

Symptoms in women:

- Abnormal vaginal discharge
- Bleeding after intercourse and/or between menstrual periods
- Lower abdominal pain
- Painful urination

IV. Diagnosis of Chlamydia

Laboratory tests are done to identify the bacterium using either a urine sample or a sample of secretions from the woman's cervix or the man's penis.

V. Treatment of Chlamydia

Chlamydia is easily treated and cured with antibiotics. When receiving treatment, it is very important to:

- Take all the prescribed medicine even if the symptoms disappear
- Make sure that your sex partner(s) is(are) tested and treated to prevent reinfection
- Schedule follow-up visits with your doctor to ensure that you are no longer infected before resuming sexual activity.

VI. Prevention of Chlamydia

To reduce your risk of becoming infected:

- Use condoms every time you have sexual intercourse
- Avoid multiple sex partners
- Avoid having sex while being treated for infection, in order to reduce the chance of reinfection or transmission.

Many sexually transmitted diseases have similar symptoms but require different medications for successful treatment. If you have questions or concerns about Chlamydia or other sexually transmitted diseases, ask your primary care physician or gynecologist.