



Chlamydia

(klay-MIH-dee-ah)

What is Chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a bacterial sexually transmitted infection (STI) that is passed from an infected person through fluids (vaginal secretions and semen) during vaginal, oral, and anal sex. It is also possible for an infected individual to transmit this infection to their baby during vaginal birth.

What Are the Signs of Chlamydia?

The majority of people who are infected (between 50% and 80%) *do NOT experience any symptoms*. An infected person CAN transmit this infection when they are NOT experiencing symptoms.

Possible symptoms may include:

- Abnormal vaginal bleeding
- Lower abdominal pain
 - Painful intercourse
 - Difficulty urinating
- Abnormal vaginal discharge
 - Rectal inflammation
 - Pink eye
- Discharge from the tip of the penis
- Urethral Itch (tip of the penis)
 - Pain in the testicles

If you experience any of these symptoms, see a doctor as soon as possible. These symptoms can also be indicators of an infection **other** than Chlamydia.

How Long Will It Take for Symptoms to Appear?

If symptoms are present, they will normally appear 2 to 3 weeks from exposure. In some cases, it can take as long as 6 weeks.

The only sure way for an infected person to know they have Chlamydia is to get testing.

When Should I be Tested for Chlamydia?

Chlamydia is one of the most common STIs in Newfoundland; therefore, if you are sexually active (or have been in the past), you should get tested on a yearly basis. If you are changing sexual partners frequently, you should get tested more frequently. A person should be tested immediately if they are experiencing symptoms, and/or if their partner tested positive for Chlamydia.

How Will a Doctor Test for Chlamydia?

- A swab during a pap test.
- A swab can also be taken from the urethra (inside the tip of the penis).
 - Testing via urine sample is also an option.

What Happens if I Test Positive for Chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a bacterial infection and is curable with antibiotics. If you had symptoms, you should start to see improvements in a few days. It is recommended to either schedule a follow-up test after you have finished your medication, and have had one menstrual period, or to schedule a follow-up one month after finishing the medication. The only way to be sure you do not have Chlamydia and do not pass it on is to finish all medication and to have a follow-up test!

How do I talk to my Sexual Partner(s) about Chlamydia?

If you test positive for Chlamydia and you currently or recently have had a sexual partner, they should be treated by a doctor as well.

Tell them that you have been diagnosed with Chlamydia, and let your partner know what their risks are. Your health professional or Planned Parenthood can help you with this!

Whether you are taking a one-dose pill, or another type of antibiotic, *it is important to abstain from vaginal, oral and anal sex for 10 to 14 days to allow Chlamydia to clear from your body.*

If you cannot avoid having sex for this period of time, use protection for vaginal, oral and anal sex at all times.

Remember that condoms do not offer 100% protection against STIs. Therefore, if you are sexually active during your treatment time, you are at risk of passing the infection to your partner or contracting it again.

Since a person can have Chlamydia more than once, you and your partner(s) should continue with yearly testing.

What Happens if Chlamydia is Left Undiagnosed?

- In those with a vagina, Chlamydia can lead to the development of Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID). PID is an infection of the uterus and fallopian tubes that can cause pain and lead to the buildup of scar tissue. This scar tissue can cause infertility (inability to have children).
- In those with a penis, Chlamydia can lead to the development of Epididymo-orchitis. This can include pain, swelling, tenderness, and fluid around the testicles and epididymis.

How Can I Protect Myself from Chlamydia?

You will never be 100% protected from Chlamydia when engaging in any type of sex. However, there are ways to help protect you and your partner(s):

- **Vaginal Sex (including sex toys):** Latex external (penis) condom, non-latex external (penis) condom **OR** internal (vaginal) condom
- **Oral Sex (penis):** Non-lubricated external condom (with water-based lubricant used on penis and on outside of condom) **OR** flavoured condom. Lubricated condoms can be used but may leave an unpleasant taste.
- **Oral Sex (vagina or anus):** Dental dam. *Please see Planned Parenthood's info on Dental Dams for more info on how to make and use these correctly!*
- **Anal Sex (including sex toys):** Latex external (penis) condom **OR** non-latex external condom.
- **Mutual Masturbation:** Washing hands after masturbating your partner and before touching your own mouth and/or boxer short area.

If you would like more information on STIs, testing and/or safer sex practices, please feel free to drop by our Centre or contact us by phone or email. If you want to see a doctor for confidential STI testing, please call us to make an appointment with a nurse or doctor.

Planned Parenthood Sexual Health Questions? We have Answers!

Location:

47 St. Clare Avenue, St. John's, NL, A1C 2J9

Hours:

Monday: 9am - 4:30pm

Tuesday: 9am - 4:30pm

Wednesday: 9am - 4:30pm

Thursday: 12pm - 6:00pm

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