

# About Chlamydia



IH-I-151  
W.D. 8/04  
Pg. 1 of 2

## What is chlamydia?

Chlamydia is an infection caused by a bacteria (germ). An infected woman can pass the infection to her baby during birth. An infected person spreads chlamydia to another person during vaginal, anal or oral sex (hooking up in **any way**). Chlamydia infections can be in the sex organs (cervix, penis), throat or rectum (rear end). Both men and women can get and spread this infection. It is one of the most common infections. This may be because many people have no symptoms and don't know that they have the infection. It is an infection that is not hard to treat, but if it is not treated it can cause very bad problems for both women and men.

## How do I know if I have chlamydia?

Many people have no symptoms and don't know that they have this infection. Some people do have some or all of these symptoms which can start from 1 week to 1 month after getting the infection:

### If you are a woman you may have:

- Vaginal discharge that is pus-like, pale yellow or white. It may smell bad.
- Itching around your vagina.
- Bleeding during sex or between menstrual periods.
- Pain during sex.
- Pain in the lower part of your abdomen (belly).
- A discharge from your rectum (if you have anal sex).
- A need to urinate (pee) more than usual.
- A burning feeling when you urinate (pee).



### If you are a man you may have:

- Itching or a stinging feeling at the tip of your penis.
- A milky pus-like drainage from your penis.
- Pain and swelling of your testicles (balls).
- A discharge from your rectum (if you have anal sex).
- A need to urinate (pee) more than usual.
- A burning feeling when you urinate (pee).

If you start having any type of discharge or a rash or sore that is not usual for you on your sex organs, or have a burning feeling when you urinate (pee), get checked by your health care provider and do not have sex again until you have been checked and treated if you need it. **(over)**

## If I am pregnant will chlamydia hurt my baby?

**Yes.** Chlamydia can cause your new born baby to have the infection in it's eyes or lungs. Some babies may be born with birth defects.



## How is Chlamydia treated?



- Your health care provider will have you take antibiotics to get rid of the infection. It is very important that you take all the pills you are given. Don't stop taking them even if you start to feel better.
- Your sex partner or partners must also take antibiotics to get rid of the infection. You can get the infection again right away if you have sex with a partner who has not gotten rid of the infection.
- Do not have sex until you have finished taking all your antibiotics.
- Do not have sex till you have been checked again to be sure the infection is gone.



## What happens if Chlamydia is not treated?

### If you are a woman:

- You can have Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) which can cause on-going pain in your lower abdomen (belly).
- PID can also damage the parts of your body that are needed when you want to have a baby. You may not be able to get pregnant.
- If you are able to get pregnant, this infection can cause the baby to start growing outside of your uterus (an ectopic pregnancy).
- Your baby can get the chlamydia infection which can cause blindness as well as other eye problems, or lung problems.
- Your baby can be born much too early or may be born dead.



### If you are a man:

- This infection can spread inside to the tube that carries sperm (semen, seed) from your testicles (balls) to your penis. This may cause pain, and sometimes makes you not able to have children.

## What can I do to keep from getting Chlamydia?



- Use condoms (and spermicidal foam) every time you have sex.
- If you are a woman who has sex and is younger than 25 years old get checked at least 1 time every year, and get treated if you are infected.
- If you are an older woman get checked if you have more than 1 sex partner or after you start having sex with a new partner who has not been checked.
- Have sex with only one person who is having sex only with you.
- Don't have sex with any man who has a milky discharge from his penis.
- Don't have sex with anyone who has a burning feeling during urination (peeing).