



Chlamydia

[Home](#)

Chlamydia – CDC Basic Fact Sheet



People who are sexually active can get chlamydia, a common, treatable, [sexually transmitted disease \(STD\)](#). This fact sheet answers general questions about chlamydia.

What is chlamydia?

[Chlamydia](#) is a common STD that can cause infection among both men and women. It can cause permanent damage to a woman's reproductive system. This can make it [difficult or impossible to get pregnant](#) later. Chlamydia can also cause a potentially fatal ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy that occurs outside the womb).

How is chlamydia spread?

You can get chlamydia by having vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who has chlamydia. Also, you can still get chlamydia even if your sex partner does not ejaculate (cum). A [pregnant person](#) with chlamydia can give the infection to their baby during childbirth.

How can I reduce my risk of getting chlamydia?

The only way to completely avoid STDs is to not have vaginal, anal, or oral sex.

If you are sexually active, the following things can lower your chances of getting chlamydia:

- Being in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has been tested and does not have chlamydia; and
- Using condoms [the right way](#) every time you have sex.

Am I at risk for chlamydia?

Sexually active people can get chlamydia through vaginal, anal, or oral sex without a condom with a partner who has chlamydia.

Sexually active young people are at a higher risk of getting chlamydia. This is due to behaviors and biological factors common among young people. Gay and bisexual men are also at risk since chlamydia can spread through oral and anal sex.

If you are sexually active, have an honest and open talk with your healthcare provider. Ask them if you should get tested for chlamydia or other STDs. [Gay or bisexual men and pregnant people should also get tested for chlamydia](#). If you are a sexually active woman, you should get tested for chlamydia every year if you are:

- Younger than 25 years old.
- 25 years and older with risk factors, such as new or multiple sex partners, or a sex partner who has a sexually transmitted infection.

I'm pregnant. How does chlamydia affect my baby?

If you are [pregnant](#) and have chlamydia, you can give the infection to your baby during delivery. This can cause an eye infection or pneumonia in your baby. Having chlamydia may also make it more likely to deliver your baby early.

If you are pregnant, you should receive testing for chlamydia at your first prenatal visit. Talk to your healthcare provider about getting the correct examination, testing, and treatment. Testing and treatment are the best ways to prevent health problems.

How do I know if I have chlamydia?

Chlamydia often has no symptoms, but it can cause serious health problems, even without symptoms. If symptoms occur, they may not appear until several weeks after having sex with a partner who has chlamydia.

Even when chlamydia has no symptoms, it can damage a woman's reproductive system. Women with symptoms may notice

- An abnormal vaginal discharge; and
- A burning sensation when peeing.

Symptoms in men can include

- A discharge from their penis;

- A burning sensation when peeing; and
- Pain and swelling in one or both testicles (although this is less common).

Men and women can also get chlamydia in their rectum. This happens either by having receptive anal sex, or by spread from another infected site (such as the vagina). While these infections often cause no symptoms, they can cause

- Rectal pain;
- Discharge; and
- Bleeding.

See a healthcare provider if you notice any of these symptoms. You should also see a provider if your partner has an STD or symptoms of one. Symptoms can include

- An unusual sore;
- A smelly discharge;
- Burning when peeing; or
- Bleeding between periods.

How will my healthcare provider know if I have chlamydia?

Laboratory tests can diagnose chlamydia. Your healthcare provider may ask you to provide a urine sample for testing, or they might use (or ask you to use) a cotton swab to get a vaginal sample.

Is there a cure for chlamydia?

Yes, the right treatment can cure [chlamydia](#). It is important that you take all of the medicine your healthcare provider gives you to cure your infection. Do not share medicine for chlamydia with anyone. When taken properly it will stop the infection and could decrease your chances of having problems later. Although medicine will stop the infection, it will not undo any permanent damage caused by the disease.

Repeat infection with chlamydia is common. You should receive testing again about three months after your treatment, even if your sex partner(s) receives treatment.

When can I have sex again after my chlamydia treatment?

You should not have sex again until you and your sex partner(s) complete treatment. If given a single dose of medicine, you should wait seven days after taking the medicine before having sex. If given medicine to take for seven days, wait until you finish all the doses before having sex.

If you've had chlamydia and took medicine in the past, you can still get it again. This can happen if you have sex without a condom with a person who has chlamydia.

What happens if I don't get treated?


The initial damage that chlamydia causes often goes unnoticed. However, chlamydia can lead to serious health problems.

In women, untreated chlamydia can cause [pelvic inflammatory disease](#) (PID). Some of the complications of PID are:

- Formation of scar tissue that [blocks fallopian tubes](#) [↗](#) ;
- Ectopic pregnancy ([pregnancy outside the womb](#) [↗](#));
- [Infertility](#) (not being able to get pregnant); and
- Long-term pelvic/abdominal pain.

Men rarely have health problems from chlamydia. The infection can cause a fever and pain in the tubes attached to the testicles. This can, in rare cases, lead to infertility.

Untreated chlamydia [may also increase your chances of getting or giving HIV](#).

 You can add this content to your website by [syndicating](#).

Last Reviewed: April 12, 2022

Source: [Division of STD Prevention, National Center for HIV, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)