



Where can I get a chlamydia test?

You can be tested for chlamydia at a sexual health clinic or by your GP. To find your nearest sexual health clinic go to www.tht.org.uk or call THT Direct on 0845 12 21 200 or NHS Direct on 0845 4647.

Treatment

Chlamydia can be cured easily with antibiotics. Until the chlamydia is treated and you have taken all the antibiotics, you should avoid sex as you can still pass it on to anyone you have sex with. Your sexual partners will also need to be treated regardless of whether they have symptoms or not. This is so that they don't give it back to you or pass it on to anybody else. You need to wait until your partner(s) have completed their treatment before starting to have sex with them again.

How can I reduce the risk of getting or passing on chlamydia?

The best thing to do is to use condoms for vaginal or anal sex. However there are still risks from other types of sex, eg oral sex. You can reduce the risk from oral sex by using condoms or dental dams.

The more sexual partners you have, the more likely it is that you will get chlamydia. So it's a good idea to have regular check-ups at your GP or NHS sexual health clinic, even if you don't have any symptoms. Before you stop using condoms with any new partner it is advised that you both go for a sexual health check up.

Sexually transmitted infections for men



Chlamydia

Get it checked. Get it treated.



Supported by



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This leaflet on chlamydia is one of a series that has been designed to give you essential information on sexually transmitted infections (STIs). It's important that you know about STIs as they are more common than many people think, and some can cause serious health problems if they aren't diagnosed and treated.

Chlamydia is the most commonly diagnosed STI and the number of cases keeps rising. Young men and women aged 16 to 24 are most at risk although people of all ages can be infected. In England, all sexually active men and women under 25 are encouraged to be tested as part of the National Chlamydia Screening Programme (NCSP). 1 in 10 of those screened in the NCSP have chlamydia.

What is chlamydia?

Chlamydia is an infection caused by bacteria. These bacteria can live in a man's throat, rectum or urethra (the tube inside the penis which carries urine and sperm out of the body) or in a woman's vagina, throat or rectum.

Chlamydia can be passed on very easily through sexual activity.

It's rare for chlamydia to cause serious health problems for men, although the infection can sometimes spread to your epididymis (which is the tube that carries sperm from the testicles). This can cause swelling, pain and fever. Sometimes, although rarely, it can make you infertile, so you can't have children.

For women, untreated chlamydia can cause serious health problems including infertility.

How is chlamydia transmitted?

You can become infected with chlamydia through vaginal, anal or oral sex if you don't use a condom. You're also at risk of infection if you touch your penis or anus after touching an infected vagina, penis or anus.

How would I know if I had chlamydia?

The chances are you won't know if you have chlamydia. It is sometimes called a 'silent infection' because about half of the men and most women who have the infection have no symptoms.

Any symptoms you do get will usually appear within three weeks after you've become infected with chlamydia. These include:

- an unusual whitish liquid (discharge) from your penis
- a burning sensation when urinating
- burning or itching at the opening or down the inside of your penis
- discomfort, itching, discharge or bleeding from your rectum.

Chlamydia can also cause conjunctivitis or arthritis but this is rare.

For women the symptoms can include:

- a change in her vaginal discharge
- a burning sensation when urinating
- pelvic pain while having sex
- bleeding between periods or after sex
- discomfort, itching or bleeding from the rectum
- abdominal or pelvic pain
- lower back pain.

How is it diagnosed?

Many sexual health services will ask you to provide a urine sample for detecting chlamydia. Depending on the type of clinic, and whether you report symptoms, a doctor or nurse may also take a small sample from the tip of your penis with a small cotton wool swab. A swab may also be taken from just inside your anus and/or the back of your throat, depending on the type of sex you've had. A swab from the penis can be a little uncomfortable for a second or two.