



CALHOUN COUNTY

Public Health Department

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Fact Sheet

Chlamydia

What is chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a common sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by the bacterium, *Chlamydia trachomatis*.

How common is chlamydia?

Chlamydia is the most frequently reported bacterial sexually transmitted disease in the United States.

How is chlamydia spread?

Chlamydia is spread during oral, anal, or vaginal sex with someone who has untreated chlamydia infection. Chlamydia can also be passed from a pregnant woman to her newborn infant during birth.

Who is at greater risk for Chlamydia?

Any sexually active individual is at risk for chlamydia regardless of ethnicity, race, age, sexual identity, or gender identity.

Sexually active young adults are at a higher risk of getting Chlamydia due to behaviors and biological factors. Two-thirds of new chlamydia infections occur among youth aged 15-24 years. Infection disproportionately infects young women. An estimated 1 in 20 sexually active young women between the ages of 14-24 has chlamydia.

In addition, disparities exist among racial, ethnic, and other minority groups. African Americans/Blacks and men who have sex with men are at greater risk for chlamydial infection.

What are the symptoms of chlamydia?

Chlamydia is known as a "silent" disease because it is estimated that only about 10% of men and 5–30% of women with a confirmed infection develop symptoms. If symptoms do occur, they usually appear one to three weeks after exposure.

See a healthcare provider if you notice any of these symptoms:

- An unusual sore
- Smelly discharge
- Burning when urinating
- Bleeding between periods

Women who have symptoms might have an abnormal vaginal discharge or a burning sensation when urinating. Women may also experience abdominal pain and/or pain during sex and bleeding between periods.

Men with signs or symptoms might have a discharge from their penis or a burning sensation when urinating. Men might also have burning, itching, and/or swelling around the opening of the penis. Pain, tenderness, and swelling in the testicles are uncommon.

While chlamydia can also spread to the throat by having oral sex, there are typically no symptoms.

What are the complications of chlamydia?

If untreated, chlamydial infections can progress to serious reproductive and other health problems with both short-term and long-term consequences. Like the disease itself, the damage that chlamydia causes are often "silent."

Untreated chlamydia in women may cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), chronic abdominal pain, ectopic pregnancy, sterility, miscarriage, or premature birth.

Untreated chlamydia in men may cause inflammation of the urethra, inflammation of the testicles, or sterility.

Reactive arthritis can occur in both men and women, following infection with or without symptoms. Reactive arthritis causes joint pain and swelling due to an infection in another part of the body.

When to test for Chlamydia?

Due to chlamydia being a “silent infection”, testing is necessary to identify most infections.

Sexually active women under the age of 25 should be screened yearly. Women over the age of 25 should be screened with present risk factors including new or multiple partners or a partner who tested positive for a sexually transmitted infection.

Routine screening is not necessary for men but is available.

It is recommended that men who have sex with men are screened at least yearly or more frequently if risk behaviors persist or if they or their sexual partners have multiple partners. Consult with your primary care provider (PCP) to learn more about when to get tested.

How is chlamydia diagnosed?

Chlamydia is diagnosed through laboratory testing including vaginal swabs or urine. Vaginal swabs are preferred in women, but urine is an effective alternative. Vaginal swabs can be performed by a clinician or self-collected. Urine samples are the preferred method for chlamydia testing in men.

What is the treatment for chlamydia?

Chlamydia can be easily treated and cured with antibiotics, regardless of HIV status.

The recommended regimen for chlamydial infection among adults and adolescents is Doxycycline twice a day for seven days. Alternative medications may include Azithromycin as a single dose or Levofloxacin once daily for seven days.

It is very important to take all medications as prescribed, even if you start to feel better. Inform all sex partner(s) that you have chlamydia and encourage them to be tested and treated. Stop all sexual activity until treatment is complete and symptoms are gone.

How can chlamydia be prevented?

The surest way to avoid transmission of STDs is to abstain from sexual contact or to be in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with a partner

This fact sheet is meant to provide general health information and is not intended to be medical advice or otherwise take the place of your doctor's orders or to diagnose your specific health problems. Check with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about your health.

who has been tested and is known to be uninfected. Latex male condoms, when used consistently and correctly, can reduce the risk of transmission.

How do I get more information on chlamydia?

Calhoun County Public Health Department

Phone: 269-969-6383

 www.facebook.com/CCPublicHealthDepartment/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Phone: 800-232-4636 (800-CDC-INFO)

Website: www.cdc.gov/std/chlamydia/default.htm

Spanish: <https://www.cdc.gov/std/spanish/clamidia/stdfact-chlamydia-s.htm>

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Updated 9/2023