

Chlamydial Infection

What is a chlamydial infection?

Chlamydia is a bacteria men and women catch by having sex with someone who is infected. It can also be given to newborn babies by mothers who have a chlamydial infection during the last part of their pregnancy.

How do I know I have a chlamydial infection?

A chlamydial infection can cause many different health problems, including vaginal discharge, spotting, pain with sex, lower stomach aches, irregular periods, a burning feeling when urinating, a discharge from the penis and trouble getting pregnant. Sometimes, however, a chlamydial infection causes no symptoms at all.

How could I get this infection?

You could get a chlamydial infection by having sex with a person who has a chlamydial infection. If you have had sex with a new partner, or many sex partners or a partner who has had many sex partners, and especially if you don't always use condoms, you are at higher risk of a chlamydial infection. Your doctor may check you for a chlamydial infection when you are pregnant, even if you have no signs of the infection, because the infection is so harmful to newborns.

How is a chlamydial infection treated?

A chlamydial infection is treated with antibiotics. Your doctor may want to obtain a lab test to see if you have the infection. Your doctor may decide to give you antibiotics while waiting for the test results. If the results show you have a chlamydial infection, it is important to tell anyone you have had sex with that you have this infection, so they can be treated too.

Tell your doctor if you have any allergies to antibiotics and if there is any chance you might be pregnant. Be sure to finish all your antibiotics and do not have sex until both you and your sex partner(s) have finished taking the antibiotics. If you get a fever or bad stomach pain while taking the antibiotics, let your doctor know right away.

How can I prevent another chlamydial infection?

Know the people you have sex with, and limit the number of people you have sex with. Always use a condom. If you are thinking about using a spermicide, be aware that spermicides containing nonoxynol-9 can cause genital irritation and increase your risk of catching an STD. However, using a condom with nonoxynol-9 is better than not using a condom at all.

Women aged 25 and younger who are having or have had any kind of sex (oral, vaginal, anal) should see their doctor on a routine basis to be screened for chlamydia.

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This handout provides a general overview on this topic and may not apply to everyone. To find out if this handout applies to you and to get more information on this subject, talk to your family doctor.