



Health and Wellness

CHLAMYDIA (kluh·mi·dee·uh)

What is it?

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by bacteria. It most commonly infects the genitals, rectum, throat and eyes. A person with chlamydia can pass it on to another person during sexual contact (oral, anal, vaginal).

How do you get it?

Anyone who is sexually active can get chlamydia. Chlamydia is most easily passed on during sex without a condom. The infection passes from one person to another through body fluids from the penis, vagina, mouth or rectum.

Chlamydia can be passed from a pregnant parent to their child during childbirth (delivery).

How can you tell if you have it?

Most people with chlamydia have no symptoms, so they don't know they have an infection. When symptoms do occur, they usually take two to three weeks to appear, but it can take as long as six weeks. Untreated chlamydia can persist for many months. Common symptoms vary depending on where the infection is.

Common Symptoms of Chlamydia by infection sites

Infection Site	Common Symptoms
Genitals	Discharge, pain when urinating, vaginal bleeding, painful sex, swelling in testicles
Rectum/Anus	Anal itching, discharge or bleeding, pain, inflammation
Throat/Mouth	Sore throat
Eyes	Itchy/swollen eyelids, red eyes, crusting

If it is not treated, chlamydia may lead to infertility in those with both male and female reproductive organs as well as abdominal pain or pregnancy complications for those with female reproductive organs.

Untreated chlamydia in the eye can damage vision.

How do you get tested?

The only way to know for sure whether you have chlamydia is to get tested.

You should get tested if you experience symptoms of chlamydia or if you have a current or recent sex partner diagnosed with chlamydia.



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Consider getting tested if you:

- have a new sexual partner
- have had oral, anal or vaginal sex and not used a condom
- have had multiple sex partners within the last 12 months
- have, or have had another STI
- are pregnant or planning to become pregnant

Testing is available on PEI through the [Sexual Health Clinic \(SHORS\)](#), your primary health care provider or a walk-in clinic. The test involves a swab of the genitals, rectum, throat or a urine (pee) sample. In some cases, you may be able to take the sample yourself. Tell the healthcare provider about all the sexual contact (oral, anal, vaginal) you have so they can test the right parts of your body.

All samples sent to the laboratory for chlamydia are also tested for gonorrhea and trichomonas. It is a good idea to get tested for other STIs, including hepatitis B and hepatitis C, HIV and syphilis when you get tested for chlamydia. Many STIs can be passed on in the same way as chlamydia. Talk to your healthcare provider about how often you should test for chlamydia and other STIs.

If you are diagnosed with chlamydia, a public health nurse will talk to you about your sex partners who might have been exposed to chlamydia. They will contact your partners and encourage them to get tested and provide education. Your identity will not be revealed.

How is it treated?

Chlamydia can be cured with antibiotics. It is important that you take all your medication, even after you start to feel better.

You and your partner(s) should wait to have sex until 7 days after you have completed treatment. Even if you are treated for this infection, you can get it again if you have sex with someone who is infected and has not been treated.

How can I not get it again?

- Use a condom during vaginal and anal sex
- Use a condom or oral dam during oral sex
- When sharing a sex toy, wash the sex toy and put a new condom on it between each use

There is no vaccine approved to protect against chlamydia.