



Health and Wellness

# CHLAMYDIA

(kluh·mi·dee·uh)

## What is it?

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted infection caused by bacteria. It is very common, especially among teenagers and young adults aged 15-24 years old, particularly young women. In PEI, on average ten (10) cases of Chlamydia are reported each week. Chlamydia can cause serious health problems, such as:

- infertility [not being able to have a baby] in men and women
- pelvic inflammatory disease
- chronic pelvic pain
- ectopic pregnancy [a pregnancy that occurs outside the uterus]

It must be treated.

## How do you get it?

You can get chlamydia if you have unprotected oral, vaginal or anal sex with someone who already has the infection. If you are pregnant, it is important to get tested and treated for chlamydia before childbirth to avoid passing the infection on to your baby.

## How can you tell if you have it?

Most people who have chlamydia do not have any signs or symptoms of infection. You can pass it on to someone without even knowing that you have it.

If you have chlamydia and you do have symptoms, you might notice:

### Female

- a change or an increase in discharge from your vagina
- vaginal itching
- bleeding between periods
- pain or bleeding during or after vaginal sex
- pain in your lower abdomen
- burning during urination

### Male

- burning during urination
- discharge from your penis
- burning or itching around the opening of your penis
- pain in your testicles



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## How do you get tested?

For males urine collection from the first part of their urine stream is preferred. For females collection of a vaginal swab by your clinician (NP or MD), or collected yourself while in the clinic is preferred. Urine samples and cervical swabs are also acceptable for females. For those who are suspected to have throat or rectal infection the same type of collection swab will be used. All samples submitted to the laboratory for chlamydia are also tested for gonorrhea and trichomonas. You should also ask to be tested for syphilis, hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV at the same time. These are done through a blood test.

## How is it treated?

Chlamydia can be cured with antibiotics. It is important that you take all of your medication, even after you start to feel better. Your past and current partners should be told that they may have been exposed to chlamydia and need to be tested and treated. You do not have to tell your partner[s] yourself. They can be told that they should get tested for STIs through online anonymous postcards or through a nurse who will contact your partner[s] without telling them your name or how they might have been exposed. If you are being treated for chlamydia, you and your partner[s] should not have sex until you have completed treatment and have been told that the infection is gone. 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.

*Many STIs, such as chlamydia, gonorrhea and HIV often have no symptoms at all. It is important to be tested often to make sure you are not infected.*

Taken from PHAC Sexually Transmitted Infections booklet (2017) found at: <http://librarypdf.catie.ca/PDF/ATI-20000s/24801.pdf>