

Live Well to

Learn Well

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health.cornell.edu

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Appointments:

Monday–Saturday

Check web for hours, services, providers, and appointment information

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What is Chlamydia?

Chlamydia is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections, affecting nearly three million Americans each year. It is caused by the bacterium, *chlamydia trachomatis*, and is easily cured with specific antibiotics.

How do you get it?

In short: from unprotected vaginal and anal sex. Chlamydia is contracted by exposure of a mucous membrane such as the vagina, urethra, anus, and—very rarely—the throat, to an infected person's mucous membranes or body fluids (e.g., semen, vaginal fluids). You can't get it from casual contact such as kissing or hugging.

Any sexually active person can get chlamydia, but people with multiple sexual partners, men who have sex with men, and women under the age of 25 are at higher risk due to increased rates of infection in these groups.

Those who use condoms consistently, who are in mutually monogamous relationships, or who abstain from vaginal, anal, or oral sexual activity are at lower risk for infection.

How would I know if I have it?

Unfortunately, most chlamydia infections cause no symptoms. In fact, about 75% of infected women and 50% of infected men are asymptomatic. That's why it's so easy to spread the infection without knowing it. If symptoms do occur, they usually start 1–3 weeks after being exposed.

People assigned female at birth who have a chlamydia infection may notice an abnormal vaginal discharge, pain with urination, lower abdominal pain, pain with sexual activity, fever, or bleeding between menstrual periods.

People assigned male at birth who have a chlamydia infection may develop a discharge from the penis, burning with urination, itching at the tip of the penis, or pain or swelling in the testicles.

People of any sex who engage in anal sex may notice rectal pain, bleeding or discharge if infected.

How can I get tested?

Testing for chlamydia may include a urine sample, vaginal swab, rectal swab, and/or throat (pharyngeal) swab.

You can schedule an appointment for testing whether you have symptoms, known exposure, or you just want a preventive screening. Appointments can be made by calling 607-255-5155 or by logging



Chlamydia is a common bacterial STI, but it often has no symptoms. Getting tested can help protect you and sexual partners.

in to myCornellHealth from health.cornell.edu.

If you've been exposed to chlamydia, you may have also been exposed to other sexually transmitted infections. Talk with your health care provider about testing for other infections such as gonorrhea, HIV, and syphilis.

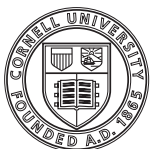
How is chlamydia treated?

Treatment is easy. Because chlamydia is a bacterium, specific antibiotics prescribed by your health care provider usually cure the infection. Both you and any sexual partners you have had contact with in the past 2 months should be treated at the same time. This prevents partners from continuing to re-infect one another.

It's important that all partners abstain from sexual contact (no oral, vaginal, or anal contact with a partner's genitals) until at least 7 days after finishing treatment. If you had symptoms of chlamydia and they do not go away 1-2 weeks after treatment, come back to be evaluated again. Otherwise, it is important that you repeat your chlamydia test no sooner than 6 weeks, and no longer than 3 months after you have been treated. Previous infection with chlamydia does not confer immunity, and so individuals can be infected again if re-exposed.

What if I don't treat the infection?

Untreated chlamydia in people assigned female at birth can result in serious damage to the reproductive organs. It is a common cause of pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) which can scar the fallopian tubes and lead to chronic pelvic pain and the possibility of infertility and future ectopic pregnancies.



Untreated chlamydia in people assigned male at birth can cause epididymitis (an infection of the tube that carries sperm to the testes) resulting in pain, fever, and (rarely) sterility.

Reiter's syndrome, which causes arthritis, inflammation of the eye, and skin lesions, is a rare complication that can affect people of any sex.

Additionally, untreated persons can transmit the infection to others, who may also be unaware of their infection, and can subsequently pass it on to others.