

Chlamydia

What is it?

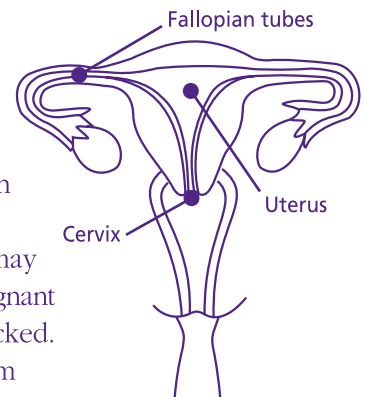
Chlamydia is an infection which is passed from person to person during sexual intercourse. If you have sex with someone who has chlamydia you can become infected.

It is one of the most common sexually transmissible infections (STIs) in New Zealand. If it is NOT treated it can be serious.

Women

This infection can spread from the cervix to the uterus (womb) and fallopian tubes and cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID).

If the tubes are damaged by infection they can become blocked. A woman may not be able to get pregnant if both tubes are blocked. This is because sperm cannot reach her egg.



A woman who has had PID is more at risk of having an ectopic pregnancy (in the fallopian tubes) or long term pelvic pain.

Your Health Professional

Men

This infection can spread from the penis to the testicles (balls) and cause painful swelling. Men can become infertile.

Babies

During birth, babies can become infected from their mother. This may cause eye infections and pneumonia.

What are the symptoms?

You may not notice anything.

Most women and some men have no symptoms. Women can have

- an unusual vaginal discharge
- bleeding between periods
- pain when urinating (weeing)
- pelvic pain - lower abdomen
- pain during sexual intercourse.

Men can have

- pain when urinating
- discharge from the penis.

How do I know I've got it?

By having a special test. For a woman this may involve an internal examination or she can take a swab from her own vagina. A man has a urine test. There is a slight chance the test result could be wrong. If you think that your result is wrong you can have another test.

How did I get it?

By having sexual intercourse with someone who has chlamydia. Remember it is possible to have chlamydia without any symptoms.

This infection has nothing to do with how clean you are or how often you wash.

What is the treatment?

Chlamydia is treated with antibiotics. You may be given 1 dose or daily doses for 7 to 10 days. It is very important to take all the pills that you have been prescribed.

- if there is any chance you might be pregnant please tell your doctor so that you are given the correct antibiotic
- tell your doctor if you are allergic to any antibiotics
- to prevent reinfection do not have vaginal, oral or anal sexual intercourse for at least 7 days after the treatment is finished for both you and all sexual partners. If this is not possible use condoms
- it is best to have another test 3 months after treatment to check you have not got chlamydia again.

What about my sexual partner?

All sexual partners must have the treatment.

Please discuss this with your doctor or nurse.

How can I prevent it?

Condoms will help protect you and your partner/s when you have sexual intercourse.

If you have any questions about chlamydia or the treatment, talk to your doctor or nurse.