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Chlamydia

Chlamydia is an infection caused by the bacteria *Chlamydia trachomatis*. It is most often spread through sexual contact.

Causes

Both males and females may have chlamydia without having any symptoms. As a result, you may become infected or pass the infection to your partner without knowing it.

You are more likely to become infected with chlamydia if you:

- Have sex without wearing a male or female condom
- Have more than one sexual partner
- Use drugs or alcohol and then have sex

Symptoms

In men, chlamydia may cause symptoms similar to gonorrhea. Symptoms may include:

- Burning feeling during urination
- Discharge from the penis or rectum
- Tenderness or pain in the testicles
- Rectal discharge or pain

Symptoms that may occur in women include:

- Burning feeling during urination
- Painful sexual intercourse
- Rectal pain or discharge

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- Symptoms of pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), salpingitis (inflammation of the fallopian tubes), or liver inflammation similar to hepatitis
- Vaginal discharge or bleeding after intercourse

Exams and Tests

If you have symptoms of a chlamydia infection, your health care provider will collect a culture or perform a test called a PCR:

- The culture will be collected during a pelvic exam in women, or from the tip of the penis or rectum in men.
- Results will take 1 to 2 days to come back.
- Your health care provider may also check you for other types of infections, such as gonorrhea.

Even women with no symptoms may need a chlamydia test if they:

- Are 25 years old or younger and are sexually active (get tested every year)
- Have a new sexual partner or more than one partner

Most of these tests may also be done on urine samples.

Your health care provider may also check you for syphilis, HIV, hepatitis, trichomoniasis, and herpes.

Treatment

The usual treatment for chlamydia is antibiotics.

Sexual partners must be treated so they do not pass the infection back and forth. A person may become infected with chlamydia many times.

A follow-up evaluation may be done in 4 weeks to see if the infection has been cured.

Outlook (Prognosis)

Antibiotic treatment almost always works if you and your partner take the medicines as directed.

If chlamydia spreads into your uterus, it can cause scarring and make it harder for you to get pregnant. You can help prevent this by:

- Finishing your antibiotics when you are treated
- Talking to your health care provider about being tested for chlamydia

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- Going to see your health care provider if you have symptoms
- Wearing condoms and practicing safe sex

When to Contact a Medical Professional

Call your health care provider if you have symptoms of chlamydia.

Because many people with chlamydia may not have symptoms, sexually active adults should be screened periodically for the infection.

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