

## Chlamydia Fact Sheet

### What is Chlamydia?

Chlamydia (pronounced: clam-id-ia) is the most common sexually transmitted disease (STD) in the United States today. It is caused by bacteria that are transmitted during sexual intercourse. You can have chlamydia without even knowing it. If it is not treated, chlamydia can cause a painful infection that can leave you unable to become pregnant when you get older. Girls and women who are infected with chlamydia are more likely to become infected with HIV/AIDS. The risks to boys and men include painful infections.

### Why should I be worried about chlamydia?

Three million Americans become infected with chlamydia each year and most of them are girls and women under 25 years old. As many as one in ten teenage girls who is tested for chlamydia is infected.

### How do I know if I have chlamydia?

Usually, chlamydia has no symptoms. In fact, three out of four girls and women with chlamydia have no noticeable symptoms. When symptoms do occur in girls or women, they include: vaginal discharge or itching, abdominal pain or bleeding between menstrual periods, and nausea and fever. Many women and men find out they have chlamydia only if their sexual partners tell them that they have been exposed or if they are tested for it.

The only sure way to know if you have chlamydia is to be tested for it in a doctor's office or medical clinic. Talk to your doctor or clinician about whether or not you should be tested, especially if you are sexually active. The test is quick and simple, and can be done with a urine test or a pelvic exam. Any test results will be shared only with you; they are completely confidential.

### How is chlamydia treated?

Chlamydia is treated with antibiotics. Your doctor or clinician will determine the best treatment for you. If you and your partner are both infected, you should be treated at the same time.

### How can I avoid getting chlamydia?

- Not having sex – including oral and anal sex – is the only sure way to prevent chlamydia.
- Use a condom every time you have sex
- Limit your sexual partners and ask your partner to do the same. Your risk of getting any sexually transmitted disease increases with the number of sexual partners you and your partners have.

### How can people with chlamydia avoid spreading it?

- Avoid having sex while you are being treated.
- Tell your sexual partners about your infection. Be sure that they get tested.
- Use a condom every time you have sex.

### How can I get more information?

- Ask your doctor or clinician.
- Call the National STD and AIDS hotline: 1-800-342-2437 and 1-800-227-8922.
- Visit the Center for Disease Control website [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

*Adapted from the NCQA article "Improving Chlamydia Screening."*

***If you think that you may be at risk, get tested.  
It's the only way to be sure.***