

CHLAMYDIA

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Chlamydia is the most common bacterial STD reported in California, and half of men infected with it don't have any symptoms. Chlamydia is transmitted through oral, anal, and vaginal sex, and some of its symptoms include:

- Discharge from the penis and/or a burning sensation when urinating
- Rectal pain, discharge or bleeding
- Burning and itching around the testicles

Usually, men will get mild irritation at the end of the penis. While some men may wait for this to go away, the infection remains present and still can be passed on to others.

An aggressive form of chlamydia, called lymphogranuloma venereum or LGV, has made a comeback in the US and parts of Europe. Symptoms often involved severe pain, discharge, and/or bleeding from the rectum. Many of the cases have been seen in persons with HIV infection. Treatment requires taking certain antibiotics for a longer period of time.

With or without symptoms, having chlamydia makes it some two to five times as easy to catch HIV (or to transmit HIV if you are HIV-positive).

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE IT?

If you think you may have been exposed to chlamydia, see your medical provider. He or she can do a test to see if you have it or not.

Usually they will have you urinate in a cup, and if you have sex with your mouth or butt, they will take a swab of your throat and anus.

CAN I CURE IT?

Yes. Chlamydia can be cured. It is a bacterium, and it can be cured with antibiotics. The medicine needs to be prescribed by a physician.

But remember, it is also very important that all your sex partners are treated too so they don't give it back to you or to others. You can catch chlamydia again after you've been cured of it.

ARE THERE ANY LONG-TERM EFFECTS?

If you have chlamydia for a long time without getting treatment, it can lead to painful swelling of the prostate and epididymis (sperm-conducting tubes), and scarring of the urethra.

HOW DO I PREVENT IT?

Chlamydia is spread during anal, oral, or vaginal sex. Contact with precum, semen, or discharge from an infected person can transmit chlamydia. Putting on a latex condom before the penis touches the anus every time you have sex can help prevent the transmission.

Half of chlamydia-infected men have no symptoms, so not seeing a discharge isn't enough to ensure your partners are free of the disease. All partners would need to get tested to be sure they weren't infected with chlamydia.

I WAS RECENTLY TOLD I HAVE CHLAMYDIA AND I WAS TREATED WITH ANTIBIOTICS.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD DO?

Chlamydia infection can last for months or years if untreated. If you're not sure exactly when you got infected, it is a good idea to tell all your current and former sex partners from the last two months (or the last partner you had if longer than two months ago) to get tested and treated. You can send an anonymous message to tell your partners they need to be tested by visiting here: www.inspot.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO FIND AN STD CLINIC NEAR YOU GO TO WWW.HIVTEST.ORG OR WWW.INSPO.TORG.