What you should know about Chlamydia

What is Chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) that affects millions of people every year. Chlamydia is spread by having vaginal, anal or oral sex with someone who has the disease. Babies can get chlamydia at birth if the mother has it.

Many people do not know they have Chlamydia.

An estimated **50 to 70 percent** of women and **30 percent** of men with chlamydia have **no symptoms**. Often, people who have chlamydia do not realize they have the disease until they have severe health problems. **Chlamydia can be cured!** Getting treated early is the key to avoiding major health problems later.

Chlamydia can be dangerous.

If left untreated, chlamydia can be very harmful for both women and men.

In women, it can cause:

- Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), a serious infection of the sex organs
- infertility (never being able to get pregnant)
- problems during pregnancy that could cause death
- joint pain, eye infections, and liver, heart or bladder problems.

In men, it can cause:

- severe pain in the penis and testicles
- sterility (never being able to father children)
- joint pain, eye infections, and liver, heart or bladder problems.

In addition, babies born to mothers with chlamydia may have eye, ear and lung problems.

How would you know if you had Chlamydia?

The only way to be sure is to get tested at your doctor's office or an STD clinic. The test is usually easy - a sample of fluid from your penis or vagina will be taken and sent to a lab. Some doctors and STD clinics are now testing for chlamydia and gonorrhea by taking a urine sample. Urine testing is both simple and painless. Ask about the availability of this test.

A woman may have:

- bleeding between periods
- unusual discharge from the vagina
- itching or swelling of the vaginal area
- painful or frequent urination
- stomach or abdominal pains
- a slight fever

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A man may have:

- discharge or drip from the penis
- painful or frequent urination
- itching and/or burning around the opening of the penis
- pain or swelling of the testicles.

REMEMBER: Many have no symptoms!

Chlamydia can be cured!

Most cases of chlamydia can be cured by taking medicine for a short time. Since you can have chlamydia and another STD at the same time, you may have to take more than one medicine at a time. Your sex partner(s) must be treated or your could get infected again.

If you have chlamydia or any other STD:

- Take all the medicine given to you
- Follow your health care provider's instructions
- Ask your sex partner(s) to get checked
- Don't have sex until a health care provider says you and your partner(s) are cured
- Don't try to treat yourself
- Don't share your medicine

You should get tested for chlamydia if:

- You or your partner(s) have symptoms of chlamydia
- You have had multiple sex partners (more partners = greater risk)
- You have another STD
- Your partner tells you that they are being tested or treated for an STD

How can you stay healthy?

- **The only sure way to avoid chlamydia and other STDs is to not have sex.** Vaginal, oral, and anal sex can all pass the disease from one person to another.
- **If you have sex, use a latex condom every time.** When used correctly, condoms can help protect you from chlamydia and other STDs.
- **Have sex with one partner who has sex only with you.** Use condoms unless you are sure your partner does not have chlamydia or other STDs.

For HIV/STD testing locations in Texas, call: 2-1-1

For other HIV/STD questions, call:
1 (800) CDC-INFO (English/Español)
1 (888) 232-6348 (TTY)

For more information, go to: www.dshs.state.tx.us/hivstd

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