

Chlamydia and Gonorrhea



What are chlamydia and gonorrhea?

Two infections that you can get from having sex with another person are called chlamydia and gonorrhea. They are caused by bacteria that are passed from your sexual partner to you. It is common to have chlamydia and gonorrhea at the same time. These infections can move up from your vagina and cervix (opening to the womb) to infect your uterus (womb) and fallopian tubes (tubes that carry your eggs from your ovaries to your uterus). Chlamydia and gonorrhea can also grow in the rectum and rarely in the mouth, throat, or eyes.

How do I know if I have chlamydia or gonorrhea?

Most women do not have any symptoms of chlamydia or gonorrhea. Some women have abnormal vaginal discharge, burning when they urinate (pee), or bleeding between periods. Many men who have chlamydia or gonorrhea will have a discharge (fluid that leaks) from their penis or burning when they urinate. Your health care provider will take a sample of fluid from your cervix with a cotton swab or a urine sample to test for the bacteria.

How did I get chlamydia or gonorrhea?

You can get chlamydia or gonorrhea by having vaginal, oral, or anal sex with a person who has the bacteria. A man does not have to ejaculate (release semen) to pass the bacteria. You can get chlamydia and gonorrhea again if you have sex again before your sexual partner is treated.

What are the risks of chlamydia and gonorrhea?

If you have chlamydia or gonorrhea and are not treated, you can get pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). This is a very bad infection that can cause scarring in your fallopian tubes. If you get pregnant after having PID, you can have a life-threatening type of pregnancy called ectopic pregnancy, which is a pregnancy that is outside the uterus and can't live. You can also have infertility, which is not being able to get pregnant when you want to become pregnant. There is a chance you may never be able to give birth to a child.

When should I see my health care provider to be tested for chlamydia or gonorrhea?

- If you think or know you have had sex with a person who has chlamydia or gonorrhea.
- If you think your infected sexual partner was not treated after you were treated.
- If your male sexual partner has burning or discharge from his penis.
- If you have sex with a new person or if you have sex with more than one person.
- If you have had another sexually transmitted infection.
- All women aged 25 and younger should have a test for chlamydia once a year.

What is the best treatment for chlamydia?

You will be given antibiotic pills to get rid of chlamydia. You may be given a medicine where all the pills are taken at one time, or you make take pills for several days. Take all the pills you are prescribed. You should be retested for chlamydia 3 months after you are treated to make sure the infection is gone. If you are pregnant, you should have another chlamydia test 3 weeks after finishing the pills to make sure the chlamydia is gone. You should not have sex until both you and your sexual partner have taken all the medicine you have been given. If you take the one-time dose of pills, you need to wait 7 days to have sex. If you take the pills for 7 days, you need to wait to have sex until you are done taking all the pills.

What is the best treatment for gonorrhea?

You will be given a shot of an antibiotic to treat gonorrhea. Because chlamydia is often found with gonorrhea, you will probably also be given antibiotic pills for chlamydia if you are treated for gonorrhea. You should have



another test for gonorrhea 3 months after you are treated to make sure the infection is gone. You should not have sex until both you and your sexual partner have been treated and you do not have any symptoms.

Does my partner have to be treated if I have chlamydia or gonorrhea?

Any sexual partner you have had sexual contact with in the past 60 days should be tested and treated for chlamydia and gonorrhea. If it has been more than 60 days since you had sex, your last sexual partner should be treated.

What if I am pregnant and have chlamydia or gonorrhea?

If you have chlamydia or gonorrhea and you are pregnant, you need to be treated. The medicine will not hurt your baby. Being treated decreases your chance of giving birth early and giving the infection to your baby at birth. You can protect your baby if you are treated right away. If you are not treated and the baby is exposed to the bacteria at the time of birth, your baby can get an eye infection, pneumonia (infection in the lungs), or a very serious blood infection.

How can I prevent getting chlamydia and gonorrhea?

- Ask your partners about their sexual history.
- Ask your partners about any previously treated infections.
- Have safe sex with correct use of a condom.
- Use a condom every time you have vaginal, oral, or anal sex.
- Get tested for sexually transmitted infections if you or your partner(s) are not monogamous (only having sex with one person).
- Be abstinent (don't have sex).

Make sure your partners get treated before you have sex with them if they have chlamydia or gonorrhea!

For More Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Chlamydia: <http://www.cdc.gov/std/chlamydia/STDFact-Chlamydia.htm>

Gonorrhea: <http://www.cdc.gov/std/gonorrhea/STDFact-gonorrhea.htm>

American Social Health Association

Chlamydia: <http://www.ashasexualhealth.org/std-sti/chlamydia.html>

Gonorrhea: <http://www.ashasexualhealth.org/std-sti/gonorrhea.html>

US Department of Health and Human Services

Chlamydia: <http://www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/chlamydia.cfm>

Gonorrhea: <http://www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/gonorrhea.cfm>

Healthy Women

Chlamydia: <http://www.healthywomen.org/condition/chlamydia>

Gonorrhea: <http://www.healthywomen.org/condition/gonorrhea>

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