

# Chlamydia

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## What is chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a common sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by the bacterium, *Chlamydia trachomatis*.

## How common is chlamydia?

Chlamydia is the most frequently reported bacterial sexually transmitted disease in the United States.

## How is chlamydia spread?

Chlamydia is spread during oral, anal, or vaginal sex with someone who has untreated chlamydia infection. Chlamydia can also be passed from a pregnant woman to her newborn infant during birth.

## What are the symptoms of chlamydia?

Chlamydia is known as a "silent" disease because about three quarters of infected women and about half of infected men have no symptoms. If symptoms do occur, they usually appear one to three weeks after exposure.

Women who have symptoms might have an abnormal vaginal discharge or a burning sensation when urinating. Women may also experience abdominal pain and/or pain during sex and bleeding between periods.

Men with signs or symptoms might have a discharge from their penis or a burning sensation when urinating. Men might also have burning and itching around the opening of the penis. Pain and swelling in the testicles are uncommon.

## What are the complications of chlamydia?

If untreated, chlamydial infections can progress to serious reproductive and other health problems with both short-term and long-term consequences. Like the disease itself, the damage that chlamydia causes is often "silent."

Untreated chlamydia in women may cause pelvic inflammatory disease, chronic abdominal pain, ectopic pregnancy, sterility, miscarriage, or premature birth.

Untreated chlamydia in men may cause inflammation of the urethra, inflammation of the testicles, or sterility.

## How is chlamydia diagnosed?

There are laboratory tests to diagnose chlamydia. Some can be performed on urine; other tests require that a specimen be collected from a site such as the penis or cervix.

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## What is the treatment for chlamydia?

Chlamydia can be easily treated and cured with antibiotics. A single dose of azithromycin or a week of doxycycline (twice daily) are the most commonly used treatments. It is very important to take all medicine as prescribed, even if you start to feel better. Inform all sex partner(s) that you have chlamydia and encourage them to be tested and treated. Stop all sexual activity until treatment is complete.

## How can chlamydia be prevented?

The surest way to avoid transmission of STDs is to abstain from sexual contact, or to be in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has been tested and is known to be uninfected. Latex male condoms, when used consistently and correctly, can reduce the risk of transmission.

## How do I get more information on chlamydia?

Calhoun County Public Health Department  
Phone: (269) 969-6493

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Website: <http://www.cdc.gov/std/chlamydia/default.htm>

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This fact sheet is meant to provide general health information and is not intended to be medical advice or otherwise take the place of your doctor's orders or to diagnose your specific health problems. Check with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about your health.

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