

## Chlamydia

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted infection caused by a bacteria called *Chlamydia trachomatis*. It is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections in the world.

The infection can be passed through vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Of those women who have an infection that is left untreated, approximately half will develop pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), a term for infection of the uterus, fallopian tubes, and/or ovaries. PID can cause scarring inside the reproductive organs, which can later cause serious complications, including chronic pelvic pain, infertility, ectopic (tubal) pregnancy, and other dangerous complications of pregnancy.

Chlamydia is known as the "Silent Epidemic" because in women, it may not cause any symptoms in 75% of cases, and can linger for months or years before being discovered. If symptoms do occur, they may include: unusual vaginal bleeding or discharge, pain in the abdomen, painful sexual intercourse, fever, painful urination or the urge to urinate more frequently than usual. In men, Chlamydia may show symptoms that include a painful or burning sensation when urinating, an unusual discharge from the penis, swollen or tender testicles, or fever.

Chlamydia testing involves sending a small sample of urine to a pathology company for testing. We routinely offer testing to all patients owing to the importance of detecting and treating Chlamydia who are sexually active. We will phone you if your test result shows that you have Chlamydia.

## Treatment

If we contact you and advise that you have tested positive for Chlamydia, you will need to see your GP to ask for a prescription for an additional 7 days of doxycycline before you reach the end of the 7 day course of tablets that we prescribed you. (1 tablet, twice a day during meals, extending the total course of antibiotics to 14 days)

The treatment for Chlamydia routinely used by most GP's is a single dose of an antibiotic called azythromycin. However, after a procedure where instruments have passed into your uterus, there is a risk that the infection could be transferred into your uterus via the mucous on your cervix. A single dose of azythromycin is less effective in this situation. The recommended treatment is for an additional 7 days of doxycycline, or alternatively, a second dose of azythromycin, 7 days after the first dose.

It is also very important that your partner be treated for Chlamydia by his GP. You must not have intercourse until a week after you have both finished treatment or you can be reinfected. Your GP may want to perform another test after a few weeks to ensure that you have both been cleared of the infection.

For further information, call the Private Clinic on (02) 9690-0000

Or contact Family Planning NSW on 1300 658 886

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/infectious/chlamydia.html>