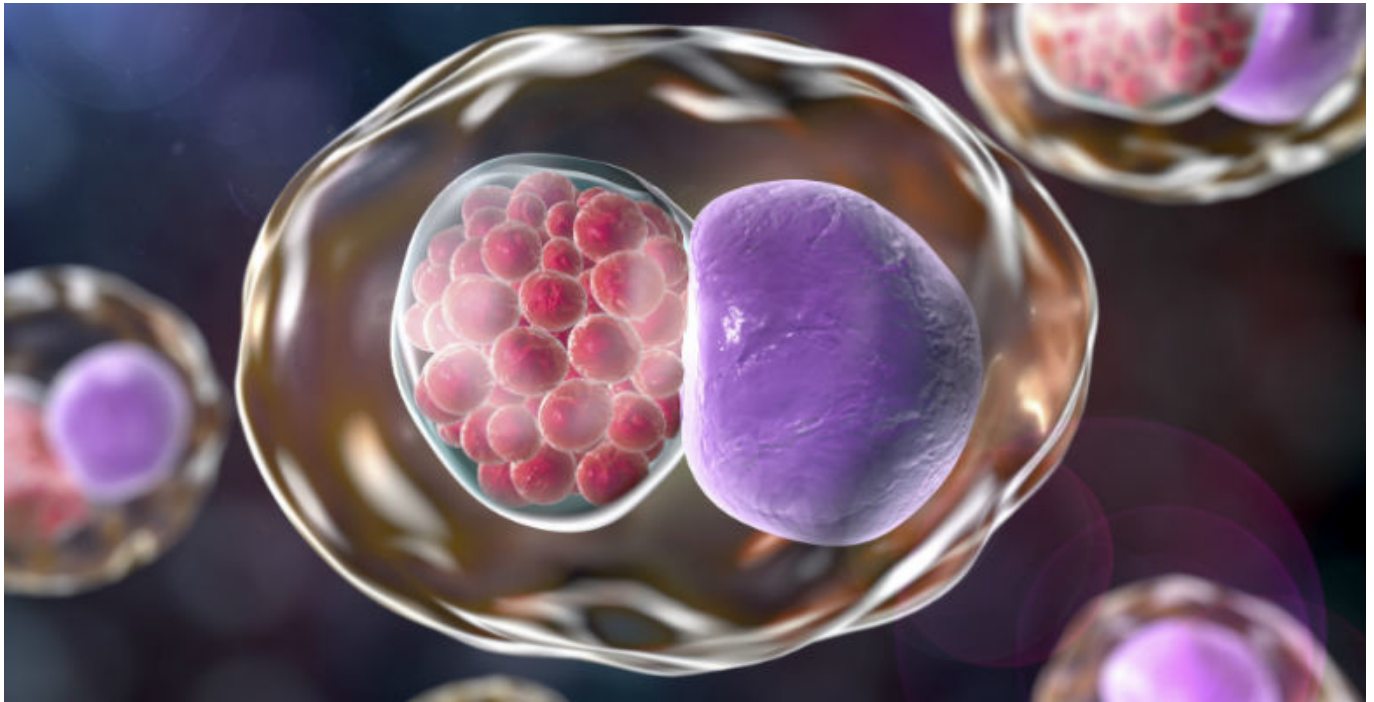


Chlamydia symptoms & treatment



FAST FACTS

- Chlamydia is found in infected semen and vaginal fluids.
- It's a [sexually transmitted infection](#) (STI) that can be passed on through [sex without a condom](#) or sharing sex toys with someone who has chlamydia (even if they don't have symptoms), or from a pregnant woman to her unborn baby.
- Chlamydia can be prevented by using [male](#) or [female](#) condoms and dental dams during sex.
- A simple urine test or a swab taken by a healthcare professional will show whether you have chlamydia.
- Chlamydia is easily treated with antibiotics.

If you've had unprotected sex, or you're worried about chlamydia or other STIs, get tested as soon as possible – even if you don't have symptoms.

What is chlamydia?

Chlamydia is caused by bacteria called *Chlamydia trachomatis*.

Is chlamydia serious?

Usually it doesn't cause any symptoms and can be easily treated. However, if it isn't treated early it can spread to other parts of your body and lead to long-term health problems.

How do you get chlamydia?

Chlamydia can be passed on very easily. You can get it if:

- you have sex without a condom or dental dam, including [vaginal](#), [anal](#) or [oral](#) sex with someone who has chlamydia (even if they don't have symptoms)
- you share sex toys that aren't washed or covered with a new condom each time they're used
- your genitals come into contact with your partner's genitals - this means you can get chlamydia from someone even if there is no penetration, orgasm or ejaculation
- you come into contact with infected semen (cum) or vaginal fluid, or get them in your eye
- if you're a pregnant woman with chlamydia you can pass the virus on to your unborn baby.

Chlamydia, HIV and sexual health

- Having an STI, including chlamydia, increases your risk of getting [HIV](#). This is because most STIs cause sores or lesions that make it easier for HIV to enter the body.
- If you're living with HIV and also have chlamydia, your viral load is likely to increase because your immune system is weaker. This will make you more likely to pass on HIV if you have sex without a condom.
- If you're taking [antiretrovirals](#), it's important to discuss with your doctor how treatment for chlamydia may interact with your HIV drugs.

If you're worried about HIV infection, find out everything you need to know in our [HIV Transmission and Prevention section](#)

How do you protect yourself against chlamydia?

- Use a new [male](#) or [female](#) condom or dental dam every time you have [vaginal](#), [anal](#) or [oral](#) sex.
- Use a new dental dam or latex gloves for rimming and fingering (exploring your partner's anus with your fingers, mouth or tongue) or use latex gloves for fisting.
- Cover sex toys with a new condom and wash them after use.
- Limit the number of sexual partners you have, remember to use a new condom for each partner, and have regular STI tests.
- Know the status of any sexual partner.

Be aware that other types of contraception such as the contraceptive pill offer no protection against sexually transmitted infections.

What do chlamydia symptoms look like?

Many people with chlamydia don't have any symptoms. If you do get symptoms, you may not notice them until several weeks after infection. In others it can take a number of months or until the infection spreads to other parts of the body. It's possible to have a chlamydia infection in your genital area (vagina or penis), anus (bottom), throat and eyes.

Symptoms for women include:

- an increase in vaginal discharge caused by an inflamed womb (cervix)
- pain or burning when urinating (peeing)
- pain during sex and/or bleeding after sex
- pain in the lower abdomen – especially when having sex
- bleeding between periods and/or heavier periods
- pain, discharge or bleeding in the anus (bottom).

Symptoms for men include:

- a white, cloudy or watery discharge from the penis
- pain or burning when urinating (peeing)
- pain and/or swelling in the testicles
- pain, discharge or bleeding in the anus (bottom).

Symptoms for women and men include:

- inflammation (redness) of the eye (called conjunctivitis) caused by infected semen or vaginal fluid getting into your eyes.

Can I get tested for chlamydia?

Yes – a healthcare professional will ask for a urine (pee) sample.

For women, a swab may be taken from the lower part of the womb (cervix) or the vagina. For men, a swab may be taken from the tip of the penis (urethra). If you've had anal or oral sex, you may have a swab taken from the rectum (bottom) or throat. In some countries a self-testing kit is available.

If you've got chlamydia you should be tested for other STIs. It's also important that you tell your recent sexual partner/s so they can also get tested and treated. Many people who have chlamydia don't notice anything wrong, and by telling them you can help to stop the virus being passed on; and it can also stop you from getting the infection again.

How is chlamydia treated?

Chlamydia is usually easily treated with a short course of antibiotics.

Whether you have symptoms or not, don't have sex until you and your current sexual partner/s have finished treatment. If you've had the one-day course of treatment, you should avoid having sex for seven days afterwards. Ask your healthcare professional when it's safe to have sex again.

If you've had chlamydia and been treated you're not immune – this means you can get infected again.

Complications of chlamydia

- As with most STIs, chlamydia puts you at risk of other STIs, including HIV.
- A pregnant woman with chlamydia can pass it on to her unborn baby, which can affect the

baby's eyes and cause pneumonia.

- Untreated chlamydia can lead to other health problems:

In women:

- Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) - infection of the uterus, ovaries and fallopian tubes that causes pelvic pain and fever. PID can lead to long-term pelvic pain, [inability to get pregnant](#), and [potentially deadly ectopic pregnancy](#) (pregnancy outside the uterus). PID can be treated with antibiotics.
- Cervicitis - inflammation of the lower part of the womb (cervix).
- Salpingitis - inflammation of the fallopian tubes (tubes that carry fertilised eggs from the ovaries to the uterus), preventing an egg from travelling from the ovary to the womb. This can sometimes be treated with surgery.
- Bartholinitis - swollen Bartholin's glands - chlamydia can cause the glands which produce a woman's lubricating mucus to become blocked and infected, leading to a cyst that can become infected and develop into an abscess. The abscess can be treated with antibiotics.

In men:

- Epididymitis - infection of the tubes that carry sperm to the testicles, which can result in fever, scrotal pain and swelling.
- Urethritis - inflammation of the urethra (the tube that carries urine from your bladder to outside of your body when you pee).
- Prostatitis - infection of the prostate gland, which can result in pain during or after sex, fever and chills, painful urination, and lower back pain.
- Rarely, chlamydia can prevent a man from being able to have children.

In both women and men:

- Reactive arthritis - inflammation of the joints, and in some people, the urethra and the eyes (conjunctivitis). Painkillers can control symptoms.

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Sources:

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