

Chlamydia

Description

Chlamydial infections are caused by the bacteria Chlamydia trachomatis and are among the most prevalent sexually transmitted diseases in the United States today.

Some bladder infections and many cases of pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) may also be due to chlamydia.

The bacteria target mucus membrane cells, or the soft, moist tissues not covered by the skin. Examples of areas that can be infected by chlamydia bacteria are:

- Surfaces of the urethra, vagina, cervix, and uterus lining
- Fallopian tubes
- Anus and rectum
- Evelid lining
- Throat (less common)

It is estimated that 75% of infected women and 50% of infected men show NO SYMPTOMS. As a result, they may not seek treatment until serious complications occur. Even without symptoms, transmission can occur. Those individuals without symptoms who are infected may unknowingly transmit the infection to sexual partners. The number of chlamydial infections is especially high in the 17 to 30 year old age range.

Chlamydia is a bacteria that invades the lower genital tract. If left untreated, it may move on to the deeper tissues of the reproductive organs where it can cause irreversible damage.

Symptoms

If symptoms occur, they may include:

Women:

- Spotting between periods
- Burning or pain during urination
- Abnormal vaginal discharge
- Severe symptoms, including those associated with pelvic inflammatory disease (i.e. lower abdominal pain or cramping and fever)

Men:

- Burning or pain during urination
- Discharge from the penis (pus, watery, or milky)
- Testicular pain
- Itching

Complications

It is important to see a medical provider for even the mildest symptoms.

If untreated, chlamydia has the potential to cause serious complications, particularly for women, including infertility. Infants born to infected mothers can acquire the infection during passage through the birth canal. These babies are at increased risk of eye infections or pneumonia.

Diagnosis

Diagnosing a chlamydia infection involves an examination of the genital area by a medical provider.

For men

It includes a urinalysis (testing of urine sample)

For women:

Diagnosis involves a pelvic examination and a swab of the opening of the cervix.

A chlamydia test is usually included in the annual Pap/pelvic exam offered at SDSU Student Health Services. Off-campus medical providers may not include this test. Be sure to ask what tests are being performed during an annual pap/pelvic exam.

Also it is important to realize that chlamydia tests are not always accurate. Some infections may be missed (false negatives) and some may be incorrectly diagnosed (false positives). A false positive occurs when your test results indicate that you have chlamydia even though you really are not infected. This is important to keep in mind when talking to your partner(s).

Treatment

All patients with positive chlamydia test results should be treated with an antibiotic. Oral antibiotic treatment is highly effective in eradicating chlamydial infections.

IMPORTANT!

- It is important to take the medication for as long as it is prescribed, even if symptoms have disappeared. Continued infection may occur if treatment is discontinued prematurely
- Sexual partner(s) should be treated as well, even if there are no symptoms
- A post-treatment examination may be recommended to ensure complete recovery
- Refrain from intercourse until all partners have completed the treatment

Prevention

Transmission of Chlamydia trachomatis can be eliminated by abstaining from sexual activity. For those individuals who choose to be sexually active, using condoms during every sexual encounter and limiting your number of partners will decrease risk of infection.

For More Information:

Student Health Services	
Health Promotion	
Visit Our Website at	shs.sdsu.edu
Facebook/TwitterFaceb	ook.com/aztechealth &
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American Social Health Association (ASH	(A)
National STD Hotline	800-227-8922

