



Diseases Fact Sheet - Chlamydia

South Dakota Department of Health

Office of Disease Prevention Services - 605-773-3737 -(1-800-592-1861 in South Dakota only)

This material is provided for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical care. We are not able to answer personal medical questions. Please see your health care provider concerning appropriate care, treatment or other medical advice.

What is it?

Chlamydia is a common sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by a bacteria called *Chlamydia trachomatis*.

Who gets chlamydia?

Sexually active people can get chlamydia; however, men and women between the ages of 15 and 30 having multiple sex partners are most at risk for this infection. Also at risk are babies born to infected mothers.

How is chlamydia spread?

Chlamydia is spread almost exclusively through sexual contact. Infection during pregnancy may result in eye and lung infection of the newborn.

What are the symptoms of chlamydia?

The symptoms of chlamydia are similar to those of gonorrheal infections. In males, symptoms can include urethritis including an opaque discharge, itching, and burning upon urination. In females, symptoms can include cervical discharge and bleeding; however, most women are asymptomatic.

How soon do symptoms appear?

The symptoms associated with chlamydia appear from one to two weeks after infection. Some people never develop obvious symptoms throughout their infection.

When and for how long is a person able to spread chlamydia?

A person can spread chlamydia from the time they are infected until they are cured.

Does past infection with chlamydia make a person immune?

No. Past infection with chlamydia does not protect a person from contracting the disease again.

What is the treatment for chlamydia?

Chlamydia is treated by antibiotics such as azithromycin or doxycycline. Erythromycin is the drug of choice for the newborn and for women with a known or suspected pregnancy.

Chlamydial infections are difficult to distinguish clinically from gonorrheal infections and these infections may be acquired concurrently. For this reason, treatment for both organisms is recommended when one is suspected.

What can be the effect of not being treated for chlamydia?

If not treated, males can develop complications including epididymitis, infertility, Reiter's syndrome and proctitis. In females, complications may include infertility, ectopic pregnancy, conjunctival and pneumonic infection of the newborn.

What can be done to prevent the spread of chlamydia?

There are a number of ways to prevent the spread of chlamydia:

- Abstain from sexual contact, or be in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has been tested and is known to be uninfected. Limit your number of sexual partners.
- Use a condom.
- Carefully wash genitals after sexual relations.
- If you think you are infected, avoid any sexual contact and visit your local STD clinic, a hospital or your doctor.
- Notify all sexual contacts immediately so they can obtain examination and treatment.

Related Sites:

- South Dakota Department of Health
 - [STD Statistics](#)
 - [STD Testing Sites](#)
 - [STD Links](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Mayo Clinic](#)