
WHAT IS CHLAMYDIA?

Chlamydia is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI) in the UK. It is caused by a bacterium called “Chlamydia Trachomatis”. Chlamydia is particularly common in teenagers and young adults. About every tenth person under (<) 25 who attends a contraceptive clinic will have chlamydia.

HOW DO I CATCH IT?

Chlamydia is transmitted from one person to another through sexual intercourse or oral sexual contact. Additionally infection of the eye can occur if there is contact with contaminated vaginal or seminal fluid (e.g. via an unwashed hand). Chlamydia can also be passed during birth to a newborn baby. You cannot catch chlamydia from kissing, towels, toilet seats, sharing a cup etc.

HOW DO I KNOW I’VE GOT IT?

Most women and most men don’t know that they have chlamydia because they don’t have any symptoms! However the symptoms below may indicate an STI such as Chlamydia.

In a woman

- Unusual vaginal discharge,
- Pain and burning when passing urine
- Some bleeding (spotting) between periods.
- Spotting after sexual intercourse
- Pain in the lower abdomen
- Pain during sex

In a man

- Discharge from urethra (the tip of the penis where the urine comes out)
- Burning and pain when passing urine
- Occasionally the testicles or other parts of the sperm tract can become swollen and painful.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET THE SYMPTOMS AFTER CATCHING CHLAMYDIA?

It will usually take about a week for the first symptoms to appear, but some people will develop symptoms more than a month after becoming infected and the majority of people will not get any symptoms at all.

HOW IS CHLAMYDIA TREATED?

Because chlamydia is an infection with a bacterium it can be easily treated with antibiotics. It is important that your partner or anybody you have had sexual relations with recently, be treated at the same time because he or she will have the infection too.

WHAT CAN HAPPEN IF YOU DON’T TREAT IT?

If left untreated in women, chlamydia can cause an infection of the pelvis (PID – Pelvic Inflammatory Disease), which in addition to causing pain can lead to infertility and increased risk of ectopic pregnancy. In men, chlamydia can cause infection of the urinary outlet (urethra) and the epididymis (which is the structure attached to the testicles). If untreated this can lead to infertility, too.

WHAT CAN I DO TO REDUCE THE RISK OF CATCHING CHLAMYDIA?

- Use condoms during sex
- Limit your number of sex partners.

When you are in a relationship and you do not wish to continue to use a condom get a chlamydia test for you and your partner before you stop using them. However bear in mind that condoms also offer some protection from other sexually transmitted infections such as herpes/gonorrhoea and HIV.

WHAT DO I DO IF I WANT TO BE TESTED FOR CHLAMYDIA?

Testing for chlamydia is very simple.

Women: Self taken vaginal swab (similar to a cotton bud, stored inside a transport tube). Swab inserted 1 to 2 cm into the vaginal and moved round 4 to 5 times touching the vaginal walls and then replaced into the transport tube.

Men: Urine specimen into a white topped bottle, either first part of the first urine passed on waking or first part of urine passed having not emptied the bladder for more than 2 hours.

For both Women and Men the sample needs clearly labelling with full name, date of birth, date and time of collection.

A completed request form needs to go with the sample (either chlamydia screening form if younger than 25 years or a microbiology form) and it is important that two preferred methods of contact, one of which ideally should be a mobile or e-mail address, are given.

WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO SEE A NURSE OR A DOCTOR

Family Planning Clinic/GUM Clinic
Sexual Health Outreach Worker
& some pharmacies all offer screening
www.foryoungpeople.co.uk lists the sexual health services and clinic times for different localities.
Sexual Health Helpline 01303 228808, Mon – Fri 9am to 5pm gives confidential information regarding local clinics and times

Tests (self taken swab for women, urine test for men) may be requested from those listed above and testing kits for those under 25 can be requested and submitted by post by contacting:
POST: FREEPOST-I WANT A TEST
TEXT: 07747 898128

E MAIL: www.iwantatest.nhs.uk or via
www.easternandcoastalkent.nhs.uk
TELEPHONE: 01303 228898

Give name, address, date of birth, mobile number and if a male or female kit required

WILL ANYBODY ELSE BE INFORMED THAT I HAVE HAD A TEST?

No. We will not disclose any information about you to any other person unless you instruct us to do so.

HOW DO I GET THE RESULT?

Under 25's via the screening service: Negative results are usually via TXT or e-mail. Positive results will be notified directly with details of where to get help.

Over 25's : The Practice will routinely contact you with a positive result but might not for negative. Please call us in 10 days.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I BE TESTED

- Under 25's testing is recommended annually.
- At ANY Age (including under 25) testing or repeat testing is recommended with a new Partner

FURTHER SITES FOR INFORMATION

- www.kidshealth.org/teen
- www.engendergealth/org.
- www.chlamydia-screening.nhs.uk

Or please feel free to make an appointment to speak to a Doctor or Nurse.

Estuary View Medical Centre

Estuary View Business Park
Boorman Way
Whitstable
Kent
CT5 3SE
01227 284300

Whitstable Health Centre

Harbour Street
Whitstable
Kent
CT5 1BZ
01227 284320

Chestfield Medical Centre

Reeves Way
Chestfield
Whitstable
Kent
CT5 3QU
01227 795130



CHLAMYDIA

The Facts