

CHLAMYDIA

FACT SHEET

What is chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a bacterial infection that is easily spread through sexual contact. It is the most common Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) in Australia. Chlamydia is also the most common STI in people aged 30 or under.

What are the symptoms?

Most people with the infection (up to 75%) do not have any symptoms. If you have had unprotected sex you may have chlamydia and can pass it to your sexual partner/s without knowing. Chlamydia can infect the cervix or urethra.

Symptoms can include:

- pain when urinating
- discharge from the vagina or penis
- pain in the lower abdomen
- pain or bleeding during or after sex
- bleeding between periods

Chlamydia can also infect the anus (there are usually no symptoms). It may also infect the eyes and rarely can cause infection of the throat.

If untreated chlamydia can spread to the reproductive organs causing severe infection and this can lead to infertility and chronic pelvic pain.

How is chlamydia spread?

Chlamydia is easily spread through any sexual activity including anal, vaginal and oral sex. Infection of the eye can occur if you touch your own or another person's genitals and then touch your eye without washing your hands.

It can also be passed on to a baby during childbirth causing infection of the eyes and/or lungs.

When should I have a chlamydia test?

You should have a chlamydia test if:

- you have had unprotected sex with a new partner
- you have recently changed sexual partners
- you have more than one current sexual partner
- you have signs or symptoms of genital infection
- you have been diagnosed as having another STI, for example gonorrhoea, herpes or warts
- you have a sexual partner who has been diagnosed as having chlamydia or another STI
- you are under 30 years of age and have ever been sexually active
- you are pregnant

Remember, most people with chlamydia do not know they are infected. You can ask your doctor about a chlamydia test even if you are seeing them for something else. A chlamydia test can also be done as part of a cervical screening test.

How is chlamydia tested?

Chlamydia is easily tested by a urine sample or a swab.

The urine test is best collected at least 20 minutes after last going to the toilet. A swab may be collected by a doctor or nurse if you have symptoms, or you can do the swab yourself.

How is chlamydia treated?

Chlamydia infection is treated with antibiotics.

It's important that you do not have sexual intercourse for one week after treatment has been started so that you don't pass on the infection or become reinfected yourself. You should also not have sex with any recent partner/s until 7 days after they have received treatment.

Your sexual partner/s of the last 6 months should be notified so they can also be tested and receive treatment. Your doctor or nurse can help you with this and there are websites where partner notification can be done anonymously.

Chlamydia is a notifiable STI. This means that the doctor has a legal requirement to notify the Department of Health of the chlamydia infection. This information will be confidential.

If you have a positive test for chlamydia it's also a good idea to get a test for blood-borne viruses such as HIV and syphilis.

Pregnant people and people with chlamydia of the anus should have a follow up test at least 4 weeks after treatment has been completed.

Everyone who has a positive test for chlamydia should have another test for chlamydia three months later to make sure they haven't been infected again.

Prevention of chlamydia

- Use condoms.
- Make sure semen, blood, vaginal or anal fluid are not passed between partners.
- Talk about any past infections with your sexual partner/s.
- Get tested regularly.

Where can I get tested?

- You can visit SHINE SA for further information, testing and treatment.

You can also:

- Make an appointment with your local doctor, health care provider or Aboriginal Health service.
- Contact Adelaide Sexual Health Centre: drop in or phone.
275 North Terrace, Adelaide
Tel: 7117 2800

CONTACT
SHINE SA

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SHINE SA Fact Sheets are regularly reviewed and updated. To download the most recent version visit www.shinesa.org.au

Clinic & Counselling Appointments and General Enquiries

Tel 1300 794 584

Clinic locations and times are available at www.shinesa.org.au

Sexual Healthline

Tel 1300 883 793 **Country callers (toll free)** 1800 188 171

Talk to a sexual health nurse about any sexual health issue.

Available 9am – 12.30pm, Monday – Friday

National Relay Service

www.relayservice.gov.au

133 677 (TTY/Voice) 1300 555 727 (Speak & Listen) 0423 677 767 (SMS Relay)