

Chlamydia, Patient information (21/10/2016)

County Medical Officers' infection prevention sheet.

Why have you been given this information?

You have been or are suspected of having been infected with chlamydia. This sheet provides information about chlamydia, how it can be treated and what you need to do.

What is chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a bacterium that is usually found in the mucous membranes in the urethra, vagina and rectum. Sometimes it can also be found in the throat. It is possible to have chlamydia for a long time, sometimes several years, without noticing it.

How do you get chlamydia?

Chlamydia is usually spread through unprotected sex, either vaginal sex or anal sex. Sometimes it is transmitted through oral sex. It can also be spread via heavy petting* and sex toys.

Chlamydia does **not** spread through clothes, towels or on toilet surfaces because the bacteria cannot survive outside of the body. You can catch chlamydia more than once.

*heavy petting = "touching", stimulating another person sexually without intercourse, mutual masturbation.

Can you tell if you have chlamydia?

Most people do not have any symptoms, so they don't notice they have the infection.

For some people, urinating may hurt a little bit.

Women may have a bloody vaginal discharge and/or pain in their lower abdomen. Men may have a discharge from their urethra and have pain in their testicles. If you have had anal sex, you may have discharge from your rectum.

Even if you do not have any symptoms, chlamydia is highly infectious.

Is chlamydia dangerous?

Without treatment, women's fallopian tubes may become damaged, which can make it difficult to conceive or result in a pregnancy developing outside of the womb (ectopic pregnancy). Men can develop infection in the epididymis (the tube that transports sperm from the testicles). Chlamydia may also cause eye infections and, occasionally, joint pain.

How do you treat chlamydia?

Chlamydia is cured by antibiotics (tablets). If you take the medicine as instructed and follow the advice you have been given, the infection will clear up. Treatment is free.

You must return to the clinic if you are given a follow-up appointment.

When you have chlamydia, you **must not risk infecting other people**. The safest thing to do is to not have intercourse or any other form of sex until your treatment is complete, i.e. after 10 days. If you do have sex, you **must** tell your sexual partner that you have chlamydia and you **must** use protection (condom/femidom).

Contact tracing – what does this mean?

It is very important that people with chlamydia are found so they can receive treatment. This is partly to reduce the risk of damage (see above) and partly to prevent the infection from spreading to others.

If you are diagnosed with chlamydia, you must tell a contact tracing officer the names of the people you have had sex/intercourse with, sometimes the names of people you had sex with

up to one year ago.

Anything you tell the contact tracing officer is confidential. The people you name will not be told who you are. They will only be told that they must get tested.

Chlamydia is covered by the Swedish Communicable Diseases Act – what does this mean?

There are rules of conduct in the Communicable Diseases Act to stop the spread of infections such as chlamydia to others. If you have or are suspected of having chlamydia, you **must follow these procedures** from your doctor:

- You must return for a follow-up appointment if the doctor tells you to.
- You must tell anyone you have sex with that you have/may have chlamydia.
- You must use barrier protection if you have sex before your treatment/testing has been completed.

If you have been given a rule of conduct which you think is wrong, you can contact the County Medical Officer in your county.

Would you like to know more?

More information about chlamydia can be found on

www.1177.se

www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se

www.umo.se (youth guidance centres online)