

## CHLAMYDIA and GONORRHEA

### What are chlamydia and gonorrhea?

Chlamydia (cla-mid-ee-uh) and gonorrhea (gon-or-ree-a) are common sexually transmitted infections (STIs) caused by bacteria. Chlamydia and gonorrhea can spread from one person to another during oral, vaginal and anal sex or through sharing of sex toys. Many people have no symptoms, but if you do have symptoms, it can take 2-6 weeks or longer for chlamydia and 2-7 days or longer for gonorrhea symptoms to appear after you have had sex with an infected person.

### What are the symptoms?

If you do have symptoms, they could include:

Males:

- discharge from penis
- burning/itching around tip of penis
- pain or burning when urinating (“peeing”)
- painful or swollen testicles
- pain, discharge or itching in the rectum

Females:

- increased or unusual vaginal discharge
- pain or burning when urinating (“peeing”)
- pain or bleeding during sex
- bleeding after sex or between menstrual periods
- pain in the lower abdomen
- pain, discharge or itching in the rectum

### What are the complications?

If chlamydia or gonorrhea is not treated, you may have serious problems. Having any STI can increase your chances of becoming infected with HIV if you have sex with someone who is HIV positive. STIs may also spread to other parts of the body.

Males:

If untreated, chlamydia and gonorrhea can cause infection of the testicles and prostate gland and can cause sterility (infertility).

Females:

If untreated, chlamydia and gonorrhea can spread to the fallopian tubes and ovaries and may cause chronic pelvic pain or pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). PID can cause a tubal pregnancy (the pregnancy occurs in the fallopian tube). Untreated chlamydia is one of the main causes of infertility (inability to get pregnant).

If a pregnant woman has chlamydia or gonorrhea, the STI can be passed to the baby during delivery and may lead to complications such as eye or lung infections.

### How do I know if I have chlamydia or gonorrhea?

The only way to know if you are infected is to get tested. Chlamydia and gonorrhea can be diagnosed by taking a swab from a female’s cervix or the tip of a male’s penis, from the throat (for oral sex) or from the anus (for anal sex). Testing for these infections can also be done using a special urine test. Do not urinate (pee) for 1 hour before giving a urine sample.

### How are chlamydia and gonorrhea treated?

Chlamydia and gonorrhea are treated with different antibiotics. If you have both infections at the same time, you will be given two different medications.

To cure chlamydia, take all the pills given to you. Gonorrhea is treated with an antibiotic injection and pills.

Your partner(s) must also be tested and treated at the same time so you don’t re-infect one another.

Do not have sexual (oral, vaginal, anal) contact, even with a condom, during treatment and for at least 7 days after you have finished taking the medication(s). →

**Is follow-up important?**

If you had gonorrhoea, you should return for a follow-up test 4 days after your treatment if you:

- were given pills only and not the antibiotic injection (you may need more medication)
- are pregnant
- have had sex with an untreated partner or new partner
- have been diagnosed with gonorrhoea in your throat or rectum
- continue to have any symptoms.

If you had chlamydia, you should return for a follow-up test 3-4 weeks after treatment if you:

- did not take the medication as instructed (you may need more medication)
- are pregnant
- have had sex with an untreated partner or new partner
- continue to have symptoms

Depending on your risk factors, you should be regularly tested for STIs every 6 months, or more often if you think you have been exposed to an STI or have symptoms.

**What about my partners and contacts?**

It is important that all sexual contacts(s) be tested and treated, whether they have symptoms or not. These infections are reportable to public health. A public health nurse will call you to ask about your sexual contacts so they can be advised of their risk and get tested and treated. Your personal information will be kept confidential. Your name is never shared.

**For more information call  
Peel Public Health 905-799-7700  
and ask for Sexual Health Information  
or visit  
[intheknowpeel.ca](http://intheknowpeel.ca) [peelsexualhealth.ca](http://peelsexualhealth.ca)  
[peelregion.ca](http://peelregion.ca)**

**Remember: Condoms help prevent the spread  
of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV and hepatitis B.**

**Free condoms are always available at Peel Public Health  
Healthy Sexuality clinics.**