

CHLAMYDIA and GONORRHEA

What are chlamydia and gonorrhea?

Chlamydia (cla-mid-ee-uh) and gonorrhea (gon-or-re-a) (also known as “the clap”, “a dose” or “the drip”) are common sexually transmitted infections (STIs). These are infections caused by two different bacteria and need to be treated with different antibiotics. You can have the bacteria before symptoms show up and some people never have symptoms. Even if you have no symptoms, chlamydia and gonorrhea can spread from one person to another during unprotected oral, vaginal, or anal sex. It can take 2-6 weeks or longer for chlamydia and 2-7 days or longer for gonorrhea symptoms to show up after you have had sex with an infected person.

What are the symptoms?

Sometimes people have no symptoms or symptoms so mild they can be mistaken for something else. If you do have symptoms, they could include:

Men:

- discharge from penis
- burning/itching around tip of penis
- pain or burning when passing urine
- painful or swollen testicles
- rectal pain

Women:

- increased vaginal discharge
- pain or burning when passing urine
- pain or bleeding during sex
- bleeding after sex
- bleeding between menstrual periods
- pain in the lower abdomen
- rectal pain

Are there complications?

If chlamydia or gonorrhea is left untreated, there can be serious problems. Having any STI can increase your chances of becoming infected with HIV if you come in contact with it. If left untreated, these infections may spread to other parts of the body.

Men:

If untreated, STIs could cause infection to the testicles and prostate gland and could make a man sterile (infertile).

Women:

If untreated, STIs can spread to the fallopian tubes and ovaries and may cause chronic pelvic pain or pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). PID can lead to a tubal pregnancy or infertility. Untreated chlamydia is one of the main reasons women are unable to get pregnant (infertility).

If a pregnant woman has chlamydia or gonorrhea, it 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 woman’s cervix or the tip of a man’s penis, from the throat (for oral sex) or from the anus (for anal sex). It can also be found by doing a special urine test.

How are chlamydia and gonorrhea treated?

Chlamydia and gonorrhea are treated with different and specific antibiotics. Because it is possible to have both infections at the same time, you may be given two different medications.

To cure chlamydia and gonorrhea, take all the pills given to you. Do not have sexual (oral, vaginal, anal) contact, even with a condom, during treatment and for at least 7 days after treatment.

Your partner(s) must be tested and treated at the same time to prevent re-infection. Remember, if you are taking birth control pills, then antibiotics may make the pill not work as well.

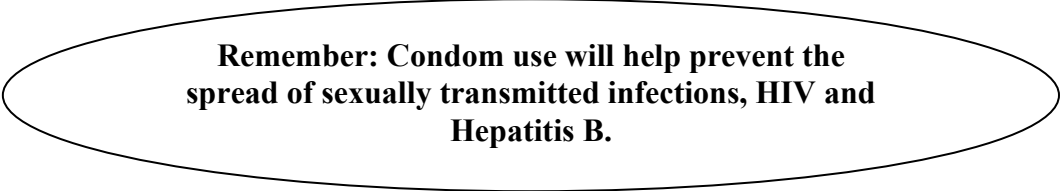
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Is follow-up important?

Yes. It is important to know that your infection is gone. Your health-care provider will tell you when to return for a follow-up test. Depending on what tests you need, you will be asked to return anywhere from 4 days to 4 weeks after finishing the medication.

What about my partners and contacts?

It is important that all sexual partner(s) be tested and treated, whether they have symptoms or not. These infections are reportable to public health so public health staff will be asking for the names of your sexual contacts so they can be informed, tested and treated.



Remember: Condom use will help prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections, HIV and Hepatitis B.

For more information:

Call Peel Health at 905-799-7700

or visit

intheknowpeel.ca peelsexualhealth.ca peelregion.ca