

What is Chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a common sexually transmitted disease caused by a bacterium, *Chlamydia trachomatis*. There are often no signs or symptoms. Damage occurs before a woman realizes there is a problem. If left untreated, it can lead to Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID). About 40% of women have PID. PID leads to chronic pelvic pain, pregnancy outside the uterus, scarring of the fallopian tubes and uterus, and infertility.

How common is it?

About 2.8 million people are infected with Chlamydia each year. It is under-reported because people do not know they have it and do not seek treatment. Women are also re-infected if their partners are not treated at the same time.

How do people get it?

Chlamydia is transmitted via vaginal, anal or oral sex. It can also be passed from the mother to her baby during childbirth. However, it is not passed on through toilet seats. Any sexually active person can get it.

What are the symptoms?

Chlamydia is a “silent” disease because 75% of women have no symptoms. If there are symptoms they occur after 1-3 weeks. Signs include:

For women

- Low abdominal pain, nausea, fever, pain during sex
- Bleeding between menstrual periods

For men

- Discharge from the penis, burning and itching around the opening of the penis

How is Chlamydia diagnosed?

Through a urine lab test, or a specimen taken from the penis or cervix.

Who should be tested?

- All sexually active women age 25 and younger should be tested each year.
- All pregnant women and older women who have new partners or are high risk.

How do you treat it?

It is easily treated with antibiotics. Both partners need to be treated at the same time. Partners should not have sex until they have completed the treatment. Otherwise, re-infection is possible.