

# Chlamydia

## Fact Sheet

### What is chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a bacterial infection that is easily spread through sexual contact.

It is the most commonly reported sexually transmitted infection (STI) in Australia.

Chlamydia is also the most common STI in people aged 30 or under.

Chlamydia can infect the cervix (top part of the vagina), urethra (where wee comes out) or anus. It can also infect the eyes and the throat.

### What are the symptoms?

Most people will not have symptoms of chlamydia (up to 90%), so people can have chlamydia and spread it without knowing.

When people do have symptoms they can include:

- pain when urinating (weeing)
- genital discharge
- pain in the lower abdomen or pelvis
- pain in the testes (balls)
- pain or bleeding during or after sex
- bleeding between periods
- discharge, bleeding or pain from the anus (bottom).

If left untreated, chlamydia can spread to the reproductive organs causing severe infection. This can lead to infertility (difficulty getting pregnant), chronic pelvic pain and pregnancy complications. This can happen to people without any symptoms of chlamydia infection, which is why STI testing is important.

### How is chlamydia spread?

Chlamydia is easily spread through any sexual activity including anal, vaginal and oral sex with someone who has the infection. 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.

Chlamydia cannot last long outside the body, so it cannot be caught from toilets, swimming pools or spas.

### When should I have a test for chlamydia?

You should have a chlamydia test if:

- you have had unprotected sex with a new sexual partner (i.e. sex without a condom or dam)
- you have recently changed sexual partner/s
- you have more than one current sexual partner
- you have any 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 don't know they have infection. 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.

### How is chlamydia treated?

Chlamydia infection is treated with antibiotics.

**It's important that you don't have sex 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.

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 should have a follow up test at least 4 weeks after treatment has been completed, to ensure the infection has cleared.

**Reinfection is common.** Everyone who has a positive test for chlamydia should have another test for chlamydia 3 months later to make sure they haven't been infected again.

### Prevention of chlamydia

- Use condoms or dental dams.
- Make sure semen, blood, vaginal or anal fluid are not passed between partners.
- Talk about any past sexually transmitted 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.
- Make an appointment with your local doctor, health care provider or Aboriginal Health Service.
- You can also contact Adelaide Sexual Health Centre:  
260 Currie Street, Adelaide  
Tel: 71117 2800  
[www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/adelaidesexualhealthcentre](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/adelaidesexualhealthcentre)



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#### SHINE SA Appointments and Enquiries

Tel 8300 5300 **Online Bookings** [www.shinesa.org.au](http://www.shinesa.org.au)  
Clinic locations and times are available at [www.shinesa.org.au](http://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](http://www.relayservice.gov.au)  
133 677 (TTY/Voice) 1300 555 727 (Speak & Listen) 0423 677 767 (SMS Relay)