

# Chlamydia The Facts

As this brochure contains only general information, professional advice from your medical practitioner should be sought before applying the information in this brochure to particular circumstances. You should not rely on any information contained in this brochure without first obtaining professional advice.



Specialist Diagnostic Services Pty Ltd (ACN 007 190 043) trading as  
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# CHLAMYDIA

## What is Chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a common sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by the bacterium, *Chlamydia trachomatis*.

## How do people get Chlamydia?

Chlamydia can be transmitted during vaginal, anal or oral sex. Once infected a person can remain infected for months to years, and can transmit the infection to other sexual partners by engaging in unprotected sex. Condoms can be effective in preventing transmission. The likelihood of transmission from a single act of unprotected sex is high - approximately 68% of male partners of infected women will be positive when tested.

## What are the symptoms of Chlamydia?

Chlamydia is also known as a 'silent' STI. You may have no symptoms. This is particularly true for women. If symptoms do occur, they usually appear within 1 to 3 weeks.

**Women:** In women the bacteria initially infect the cervix and the urethra (urine canal). Therefore, the woman might have an abnormal vaginal discharge or a burning sensation when urinating. There may be symptoms of lower abdominal pain, low back pain, nausea, fever, pain during intercourse, or bleeding between menstrual periods.

**Men:** Men might have a discharge from their penis or a burning sensation when urinating.



## What are the complications of Chlamydia?

If left untreated Chlamydia can lead to serious health problems in women including:

- Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID): this happens in up to 40% of women with untreated Chlamydia. This is where the fallopian tubes are infected and cause infertility.
- Ectopic Pregnancy: pregnancy outside the womb, in a fallopian tube.

Complications among men are rare. Inflammation of the testicles can cause infertility.

## How is Chlamydia diagnosed?

There are laboratory tests to diagnose Chlamydia. These can be performed on a urine sample and on a swab collected by your doctor from a site such as the penis or cervix.

## What is the treatment of Chlamydia?

Chlamydia is easily cured with antibiotics. It is important that all sexual partners are traced, evaluated, tested and treated. Persons infected with Chlamydia should abstain from sexual intercourse until they and their sexual partners have completed treatment, otherwise reinfection is possible.