

# *Patients' Guide to* Chlamydia

## *What is chlamydia?*

Chlamydia is one of the most common bacterial sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in Singapore. It affects both men and women.

## *How is chlamydia passed?*

Chlamydia is passed through sexual intercourse with an infected person (oral, vaginal, or anal sex).

## *What are the signs and symptoms?*

Chlamydia is known as a "silent infection" because most infected people do not show any obvious signs or symptoms. If signs are present, they may include the following.

### **In males:**

- Burning pain or irritation in the penis when passing urine
- Increased frequency of urination
- Discharge (white/cloudy/watery) from the tip of the penis

### **In females:**

- Abnormal vaginal discharge
- Pain when passing urine
- Abnormal vaginal bleeding
- Pelvic pain

## *When do signs/symptoms appear?*

Those infected with chlamydia hardly show any symptoms. However, if symptoms do appear, they usually do after several weeks since the sexual exposure.

## *How is chlamydia diagnosed?*

- Swab sample — a sample will be taken with a cotton swab stick from the urethra
- First catch urine sample

At DSC Clinic, we use PCR tests.

## *Who should get tested?*

Those who are sexually active, or have had unprotected sex with casual partners or sex workers. However, one can have a test for chlamydia even if one shows no signs or symptoms.

Chlamydia is also easily passed on between sexual partners, therefore both the infected person and their partner should be tested at the same time before further sexual activity.

## *Can chlamydia cause other problems?*

In **males**, it can cause painful and swollen testicles, or an infection in the rectum and/or throat.

In **females**, it can cause infertility, and/or an infection in the womb and tubes, causing abdominal pain, damaged fallopian tubes, and ectopic (abnormal) pregnancy.

Having chlamydia can also increase one's risk of getting HIV.

## *How can chlamydia affect pregnancy?*

It can increase the risk of premature or still birth. Babies born to women with chlamydia can also be infected in the eyes and lungs when passing through the birth canal.

Pregnant women with chlamydia will be given an antibiotic that is safe in pregnancy.

If one is pregnant or think they may be, they are encouraged to inform the doctor so the appropriate antibiotic can be prescribed.

## *Can chlamydia be treated?*

**Yes**, chlamydia can be treated and cured with a course of antibiotics. Avoid sex until both you have completed your medications.

## *Do those with chlamydia need to return for follow-up visits?*

Follow-up is important to allow doctors to ensure patients with chlamydia are cured.

If one has chlamydia, they are to return for a follow-up on the following:

- 3 months for blood tests (for HIV and syphilis)
- 4 weeks for another test if one is pregnant

If one had missed their follow-up appointment, DSC will follow up with them via phone or letter.

## *Important Notes on Chlamydia*

- Take all medication as advised
- Avoid sex while you and your partner(s) are on medication

### **Practice safer sex**

- Use condoms correctly and every time you have sex
- Avoid drinking excessive amounts of alcohol before or during sex, as this may impair judgement.
- Have sex without an exchange of bodily fluids (e.g. semen or vaginal secretions).

## *Reach Out to Us*

If you still have queries, feel free to call us at the following numbers:

**HIV/STI Hotline (8am – 5pm)**

1800 252 1324

**Health Info Recorded Hotline (24 hours)**

+65 6295 2944

**Appointments**

+65 6293 9648

You may also visit [www.dsc-clinic.sg](http://www.dsc-clinic.sg) for more information, or find us at the DSC Clinic, 31 Kelantan Lane #01-16 S(200031).

## *Disclaimer*

We have attempted to provide full, accurate, and up-to-date information in this patient information leaflet, based on current medical evidence and opinion. However, information and advice may vary from different sources and over time. If you have any further questions, do see your doctor or healthcare provider.

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