

Chancroid



Chancroid is a sexually transmitted infection caused by the bacterium *Haemophilus ducreyi*.



Chancroid infection is a notifiable condition¹

How chancroid is spread

Chancroid is spread by sexual contact during oral, anal or vaginal intercourse.

Signs and symptoms

A red lump occurs at the site of infection in the genital area or around the anus. This lump fills with pus and eventually ruptures leaving an open sore (also known as an ulcer). The ulcer is usually 1 to 2 centimetres in diameter with soft, irregular borders that bleed easily when touched. The ulcer can be very painful or it may go unnoticed. It is common for there to be more than one ulcer.

Some people develop swollen, hard and painful lymph glands in the groin. This results in a painful pus filled swelling, which will eventually rupture.

Some people with chancroid infection may not show any symptoms.

Chancroid infection is a risk factor for the transmission of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Diagnosis

Tests for chancroid are not usually done in Australia. If tests for common causes of genital sores are negative then specimens from the ulcer may be collected and sent for specific testing.

Incubation period

(time between becoming infected and developing symptoms)

Usually 4 to 10 days with a range of 1 to 35 days.

Infectious period

(time during which an infected person can infect others)

Chancroid is contagious while the infected person has open sores.

Treatment

Effective antibiotic treatment is available on prescription from a doctor. With treatment, ulcers usually heal within two weeks. It is important to complete the course of antibiotics and attend follow-up visits to ensure the infection has been cured.

If left untreated, the ulcers get bigger and destroy areas of skin and genital tissue and infected glands can rupture.

Pain killers can be taken if needed.

Prevention

- > All sexual partners need to be contacted, tested and treated, if needed. Even if partners have no symptoms they may be able to transmit infection to other sexual partners or reinfect you.
- > Avoid sexual contact until you and infected partners have completed treatment and the sores have completely healed.
- > Attend follow-up appointments to ensure the infection has been cured.
- > Testing to exclude other sexually transmitted infections is advisable.
- > Use condoms and other barrier methods to prevent getting sexually transmitted infections, including chancroid.
- > Get tested for sexually transmitted infections regularly (even if you do not have symptoms), particularly when you have new sexual partners.

Useful links

- > SA Health website:
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au
 - Notifiable conditions - what to know when you have one
 - Avoiding sexually transmitted infections
 - Adelaide Sexual Health Centre
- > SHINE SA: www.shinesa.org.au

1 – In South Australia the law requires doctors and laboratories to report some infections or diseases to SA Health. These infections or diseases are commonly referred to as 'notifiable conditions'.

You've Got What? Chancroid

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The SA Health Disclaimer for this resource is located at www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/youvegotwhat

Version 1.0. September 2023.

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This document has been reviewed and endorsed by SQCAG* for consumers and the community – Month Year

*SA Health Safety and Quality Community Advisory Group.



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