Follow-up

Sexual partner(s) should be tested for chlamydia, even if they have no symptoms. If your partner receives treatment, do not have intercourse until a week after both of you have been treated. If you have been diagnosed with chlamydia, you should have a blood test in three months to detect blood-borne infections you might have contracted at the time you had chlamydia.

Prevention

Use a condom. A condom worn during intercourse provides good protection against chlamydia infection.

Have an STD check-up, including a chlamydia test:
- after sex with a new or casual partner
- immediately if symptoms occur, eg discharge, pain when passing urine
- if a sexual partner has chlamydia or symptoms of chlamydia.

Remember, most people with chlamydia do not know they are infected and continue to have sex. Practising safe sex and being checked regularly for chlamydia, especially if you change partners, are the most effective ways of protecting yourself.

Disclaimer

The information contained within this publication is for general information only. Readers should always seek independent, professional advice where appropriate. Royal Adelaide Hospital will not accept any liability for any loss or damage arising from reliance upon any information in this publication.

Please refer any questions about this information to your treating medical officer and/or nursing staff.

Location

No appointment necessary
Free and confidential advice, testing and treatment for all STDs including HIV/AIDS

For more information

Sexually Transmitted Diseases Services
Web site
www.stdservices.on.net/std/chlamydia
Email
std.services@health.sa.gov.au
Monday, Thursday and Friday
10am – 4.30pm
Tuesday and Wednesday
11am – 6.30pm
1st floor, 275 North Terrace
Adelaide 5000
Telephone
8222 5075
Toll free country call
1800 806 490

Non-English speaking: for information in languages other than English, call the Interpreting and Translating Centre on (08) 8226 1990 and ask them to call the Royal Adelaide Hospital. This service is free.
Chlamydia

Chlamydia is an infection of the reproductive organs caused by the bacterium Chlamydia trachomatis. It is a common condition and there are no clear risk factors. It often occurs in young adults and simply changing sexual partners can put anyone at risk.

If chlamydia is not diagnosed soon after infection, complications may occur in both women and men. Fortunately, it can be simply and effectively treated.

Transmission

Chlamydia is sexually transmitted, usually through vaginal intercourse. Occasionally it is transmitted by oral sex and anal sex. Chlamydia can be passed from mother to child during birth, causing eye infections (conjunctivitis) or pneumonia.

Diagnosis

Chlamydia is best diagnosed from swab tests, collected from the cervix in women or the urethra in men. Swabs can also be taken from the throat or rectum if there is a possibility of infection there.

A urine test can be used to screen men for chlamydia, if they have no symptoms of the disease. This test is not as sensitive as a swab test and is not recommended for women.

Chlamydia cannot be diagnosed from a blood test.

Treatment

Chlamydia can be treated with antibiotics such as azithromycin (Zithromax) or doxycycline (Doryx, Vibramycin).

Notes on azithromycin

Directions
Take one gram of azithromycin as a single dose.

Side effects
Azithromycin may cause abdominal pain and nausea. If this happens, eating sometimes helps. The symptoms usually settle within a few hours.

Important!
Do not have sex until at least a week has passed. If your partner receives treatment for chlamydia, do not have sex until at least a week after both of you have been treated.

Never share your treatment with anyone else. Partners should be examined by a doctor to check if they require treatment too.

Doxycycline must never be taken by young children or women who are pregnant or breast feeding.

Further sex

Do not have sex while taking the tablets, or for one week after treatment with azithromycin. There may still be a risk of transmitting the infection to sexual partners during this time. For men, symptoms such as discharge, stinging or irritation will settle down more quickly if you do not have sex (vaginal, oral or anal), masturbate, or squeeze or milk the penis.