

# CHLAMYDIA

## TO YOUR HEALTH - PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

# 10.2

### DESCRIPTION

Chlamydia is a common sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by the bacterium *Chlamydia trachomatis* and affects both sexes. Three quarters of infected women and about half of infected men have no symptoms. Chlamydia is the most common reported STI in the United States. Chlamydia can be transmitted during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Chlamydia can also be passed from an infected mother to her baby during vaginal childbirth.

### FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Abnormal vaginal discharge
- Urethral discharge (males)
- Rectal swelling, pain or discharge
- Reddening of the vagina or tip of the penis
- Lower abdominal or back pain
- Fever
- Pain when urinating
- Pain during intercourse

### CAUSES

Chlamydia is spread by:

- Unprotected vaginal and anal intercourse.
- Oral-genital contact.
- Vaginal infection during delivery of a newborn, which may infect the baby.

### RISK INCREASES WITH

- Unprotected sexual activity
- New sex partner
- Multiple sex partners
- Having other STI's

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Use of condoms during sexual activity.
- Treatment of all sexual partners of any infected person with an antibiotic.
- Annual screening for chlamydia

### EXPECTED OUTCOME

Complete cure with adequate antibiotic treatment. Having chlamydia does not produce immunity from it in the future. Reinfection can occur.

### POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Infertility or sterility
- Infecting one's sexual partner(s)
- Infections in pelvic organs
- Ectopic pregnancy.
- Liver infection
- Reiter's syndrome (a form of arthritis)

### GENERAL MEASURES

- Chlamydia screening is recommended annually for all sexually active women 25 years of age and younger. An annual screening test also is recommended for older women with risk factors for chlamydia (a new sex partner or multiple sex partners). All pregnant women should have a screening test for chlamydia.
- Urinary screening also recommended for sexually active males.
- Any genital symptoms such as discharge or burning during urination or unusual sore or rash should be a signal to stop having sex and to consult a health care provider immediately. If a person has been treated for chlamydia (or any other STI), he or she should notify all recent sex partners so they can see a health care provider and be treated. The person and all of his or her sex partners must avoid sex until they have completed their treatment for chlamydia. All sex partners must be tested or treated

### MEDICATION

Treatment with an antibiotic

### ACTIVITY & DIET

Delay sexual relations until treatment is completed, all sexual partners' treatment is completed, and symptoms are gone.

### NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF...

- Symptoms persist longer than one week or worsen despite treatment.
- Unusual vaginal bleeding or swelling develops
- Abdominal pain, nausea, or vomiting
- Fever over 101°.

## Student Health Center

## WWW.SIU.EDU/~SHC

This information is for educational purposes only. Consult your doctor for specific medical advice, diagnosis and treatment.



## 618-453-3311

Dial-A-Nurse is available after-hours until 10:30 p.m. during fall and spring semesters. In case of emergency dial 911.