



Department of

**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

An Roinn

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta  
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

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chlamydia **big** deal!  
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# chlamydia is a big deal!



About 1 in 10 under 25 year olds who've had unprotected sex have chlamydia. Both men and women can catch it, but because there are often no symptoms, they probably don't know they've got it. A quick and easy urine test can tell if the infection is present. If the test is positive it can be easily treated with antibiotics.

## What is chlamydia?

- It's a sexually transmitted infection or STI, caused by bacteria that affect the sexual organs.
- It can only be caught by having sex with someone who already has chlamydia. It is passed by person-to-person contact by vaginal, oral or anal sex.
- Most people do not have symptoms, but some do, and they include:
  - Pain when you're having sex or urinating
  - Unusual discharge
  - Bleeding after sex or between periods
  - Pain below your belly button or in your testicles.

If you notice any of these symptoms, see a doctor or nurse straight away.

You can visit your GP or, if you'd rather, a GUM (genitourinary), sexual health or contraceptive (family planning) clinic.

If you have chlamydia and it's not treated, the infection can spread to other parts of your body. In women, untreated chlamydia may lead to pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility or to an ectopic pregnancy in the future, where the foetus grows outside the womb.



### **What is the test for chlamydia?**

The test is simple, painless and totally voluntary. If you don't want to do it, you don't have to. If you choose to, just provide a urine sample which will be sent off to a laboratory for testing.

#### **IMPORTANT:**

- **Fill out the form inside the test kit legibly.**
- **Make sure you fill in your contact details so the GUM clinic can let you know your result.**

### **How long will the result take?**

You'll usually get your result about 10 days after your sample goes to the lab. If you've asked for your result to be posted by letter then it might take a little longer. If you haven't heard anything within 2 weeks, contact the participating pharmacy and they'll follow up your result with the

laboratory. The pharmacy will not give out results. A sexual health advisor from the GUM clinic will contact you with your result and explain what to do next.

### **What does the result mean?**

You'll be told your test result is either negative or positive. If it's negative, this means that you didn't have chlamydia at the time of the test. If it's positive, this means that you have chlamydia and you'll need to take a course of antibiotics to treat it.



Sometimes the test result isn't clear or the laboratory hasn't been able to test your urine sample properly. This isn't anything to worry about and if it happens, you'll be asked to provide a new urine sample.

### **What if my test is negative?**

If your test is negative, you've got the 'all clear' on this occasion but to avoid getting chlamydia in future, it's really important you protect yourself by using a condom every time you have sex. Using a condom can help reduce your risk of getting or passing on chlamydia and other STIs including HIV.

If your test is negative but you've got some of the symptoms we mentioned earlier, make sure you seek advice from your GP, pharmacist or go along to a GUM (genitourinary), sexual health or

contraceptive (family planning) clinic. You might have a different sexually transmitted infection, like gonorrhoea, and you may need a different test to confirm this.

## What if my test result is positive?

**Don't panic.** Chlamydia is easy to treat. If your test is positive, a course of antibiotics will treat it. The people you've had sex with recently will also need to take antibiotics to stop them having problems in the future, or passing the infection back to you or on to someone else.



### IMPORTANT:

- **Make sure to tell whoever you're getting your treatment from if you have any drug allergies or if think you could be pregnant.**

## If my test is positive, what treatment will I get?

Most people can be treated with an antibiotic called azithromycin. It's easy to take as it's just 4 capsules (250mg each) to be taken as a single dose.

If you can't take azithromycin, you may be treated with another antibiotic called doxycycline. You'll need to take one 100mg capsule twice a day for 7 days.

## **IMPORTANT:**

- **Make sure you complete the course of antibiotics otherwise the chlamydia infection may remain.**

## **Will the antibiotics affect the contraceptive pill or patches?**

Antibiotics can stop the contraceptive pill or patch from working properly and if this happens, you could get pregnant. So, if you need treatment with antibiotics, make sure you follow the instructions in your pill or patch packet.



## **IMPORTANT:**

- **Make sure you and your partner don't have sex, (oral, vaginal, anal or use sex toys), even with a condom, for 7 days after both of you have been treated.**
- **If you have sex with an untreated partner within 7 days you may need to be treated again.**
- **If you're sick within 3 hours of taking the capsules, they might not work properly, so go back to your pharmacy for advice.**

## **What about my partner?**

If you test positive for chlamydia, you, your partner and ex-partners will need antibiotic treatment. A sexual health advisor from the GUM clinic will talk to

you about informing partners and ex-partners. There are a number of ways that partners can be contacted confidentially and the sexual health advisor will help you choose the best way for you.

Partners will not need to take the test.



**It's important that all partners receive antibiotic treatment even if they have no symptoms.**

### **Can chlamydia come back?**

If you and your partner complete the course of antibiotics and don't have sex until the course has finished, then the chlamydia will be treated.

If you have sex with a partner before he or she is treated or during treatment, you could get infected. You can catch chlamydia again if you have sex with a new partner who has it, so make sure you always use a condom. If you think you're putting yourself at risk, get another test.

## Useful Contacts

### **fpaNI**

Provides information and advice on contraception and general sexual health and details of local family planning clinics.

028 9032 5488 (Belfast)

028 7126 0016 (Londonderry)

### **Brook Belfast**

Provides information, advice and contraceptive supplies for young people up to the age of 19.

### **Genito Urinary Medicine (GUM) Clinics in Northern Ireland**

Telephone the following for information or advice on STIs:

#### **Royal Victoria Hospital**

028 9063 4050 (Belfast)

#### **Altnagelvin Hospital**

028 7161 1269 (Londonderry)

#### **Causeway Hospital**

028 7034 6028 (Coleraine)

#### **Daisy Hill Hospital**

028 3083 5050 (Newry)

**(GUM clinics also provide check-ups and treatment)**

### **The HIV Support Centre**

Freephone 0800 137437