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The facts about

CHLAMYDIA.

Sex without a condom increases your likelihood of getting an STI.

WHAT IS IT?

Chlamydia is a bacterial infection that can be spread during anal, vaginal/frontal or oral sex or when using sex toys. It may also cause conjunctivitis if fluids containing the bacteria get in your eye.

If chlamydia is not treated it can cause serious problems, including pain, inflammation and infertility. It can also lead to complications in pregnancy.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Symptoms might show within 1 to 3 weeks of infection, but over half of people infected have no symptoms.

In the penis it can cause:

- a whitish, cloudy or watery discharge
- pain when urinating
- burning or itching in the urethra, the tube that carries urine out of the body.

It can also cause pain and swelling in the testicles.

In the vagina/front hole, it can cause:

- a change in, or unusual discharge
- pain when urinating
- pain during sex
- pain in the belly or lower back
- bleeding between periods or after sex.

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF?

Using an external or internal condom cuts the risk, but doesn't eliminate it entirely. Using water or silicon based lube with condoms also helps avoid any small tears in the skin which increases the likelihood of infection.

Avoid sharing sex toys without putting a new condom over the toy, and use a new condom with each partner when having sex with more than one person at the same time.

In the rectum it generally causes no symptoms but might cause discomfort and discharge.

In the throat it usually shows no symptoms.

In the eyes, it can cause pain, redness and discharge.

WHERE CAN I GET TESTED?

You can get tested for chlamydia at a sexual health clinic, by using an online testing service or at a pharmacy if that service is available in your area.

HOW IS IT TREATED?

Chlamydia is treated with antibiotics - don't have sex until 7 days after the treatment has finished or you could pass on the infection.

If you continue to have pelvic pain or painful sex that doesn't improve, see your doctor or nurse as it may be necessary to have further treatment or investigate other possible causes of the pain.

They should also talk with you about your recent sexual partners so they can offer them a test for chlamydia and treat them if needed.