

COMMON... AND DEADLY

Chlamydia and gonorrhea are the two most common sexually transmitted infections (STIs). They affect the body in similar ways and often occur at the same time.

Studies show an increasing number of chlamydia and gonorrhea cases involving men who have sex with men. Having one or both of these infections makes it easier for you to get more deadly infections including HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

HARD TO FIND

You may have heard that chlamydia and gonorrhea can be cured. It is true that medications can cure these STIs – if they are found. You might have one of these infections and not show any signs or symptoms for weeks, or never. Knowing there is a cure is not an excuse for carelessness. The medications do not reverse the damage done to your body or the infection, and they cannot help you if you get HIV as a result. Practice prevention. Understanding these infections and how to avoid them is the best way to ensure a healthy lifestyle.



TWO INFECTIONS THAT GO TOGETHER

Gonorrhea and chlamydia often happen at the same time. Both can be easily spread by oral, vaginal or anal sex. Both can be treated with antibiotics but can cause serious damage to your body if they are not detected soon enough.

CHLAMYDIA: THE #1 STI

Chlamydia (pronounced kluh-MID-ee-uh) is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections (STI) in the United States. More than half of all chlamydia cases show no outward signs of infection. Only a medical test can definitely find chlamydia.

If left untreated, chlamydia will cause infertility in both sexes. In women, this advanced stage is called pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) and can infect a newborn's eyes. Men will experience painful swelling of the testicles, known as epididymitis.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Centers for Disease Control

www.cdc.gov/std/chlamydia/

www.cdc.gov/std/gonorrhea/

in the know

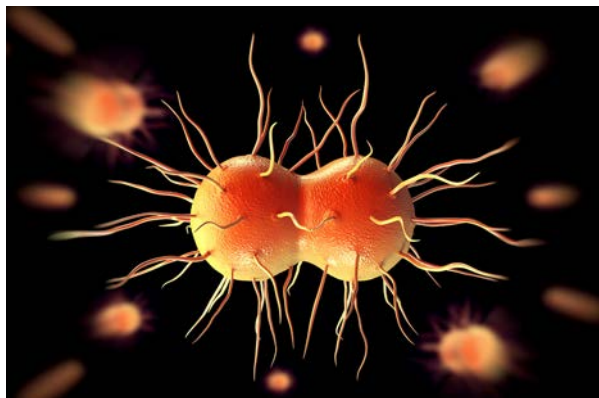
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CHLAMYDIA & GONORRHEA

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GONORRHEA: THE #2 STI

Gonorrhea is the second most frequently reported STI in the United States. It can infect the mouth, throat, anus, and urethra (canal through which urine is passed), as well as a woman's vagina or cervix. It might take as long as 30 days before symptoms appear.

If left untreated, gonorrhea can spread to the heart. It also greatly increases your chances of getting the HIV virus or passing HIV to your partner.

RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS

Seventy-five percent of the time there are no symptoms (signs) of either chlamydia or gonorrhea.



Signs that are common to both STIs include:

- Discharge from penis or vagina — a liquid that is not normal
- Discharge from anus — white-yellowish liquid in anus
- Pain or burning feeling when urinating
- Pain in lower belly
- Pain in testicles
- Swelling and soreness of genitals
- High fever

Getting tested is the only definite way to find an infection. Get tested once a year. Chlamydia or gonorrhea cases need to be treated before serious harm is done to your body, or your partner's.



WHY GAY MEN ARE AT RISK

Any type of sexual contact can transmit chlamydia or gonorrhea — vaginal, oral or anal. But men who have sex with men and practice anal sex, are especially at risk. This is because semen that carries the infection has greater access to the bloodstream through the anus.

Since infected people often show no signs, your partner may not know he is spreading chlamydia or gonorrhea. It is up to you to be careful. Get to know your partner before becoming intimate. Make sure you have both been recently tested by a doctor or at a clinic.



GET CURED FAST

Chlamydia and gonorrhea can be treated with medications called antibiotics. You can get antibiotics by seeing your doctor or going to a medical clinic.

It is very important to treat any infection as early as possible. Waiting too long will harm your body and could cause deadly complications, like getting the HIV virus.

“ **OVER 1 MILLION PEOPLE ARE INFECTED WITH AN STD EVERYDAY.** ”

WAYS TO PREVENT INFECTION

The only sure way to avoid being infected with chlamydia, gonorrhea or any other STI is by not having any sexual contact.

If you choose to be sexually active, always be sure to wear a condom. Wearing a condom during vaginal, oral, or anal sex can help prevent infections.

Follow these tips to avoid chlamydia and gonorrhea:

- Get to know your partner well before having sex
- Always wear a condom
- Make decisions about having sex when sober. Alcohol and drugs affect your ability to make sound decisions.



Sex without a condom is only safe when you and your uninfected partner only have sex with each other. Talk to your partner before you make that decision. Be sure that you both go to a doctor or clinic to get tested for STIs.

Be open and share your concerns about infection with your partner. They will thank you for it.