

Chlamydial conjunctivitis – Patient Leaflet

Tom KH Butler MBChB, FRCOphth | Consultant
Ophthalmologist

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What is chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a bacterial infection. It is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in the UK. It is most common among young sexually-active adults.

Symptoms of chlamydia

Most people with chlamydia don't notice any symptoms and don't know they have it. In the eyes, chlamydia can cause irritation, pain, swelling and discharge similar to conjunctivitis. These symptoms continue for several weeks until treatment is started.

Most often, patients with chlamydial conjunctivitis will have an associated genital infection (of which they may be unaware). It is important to arrange referral to a genito-urinary medicine clinic for a full investigation and treatment.

Sometimes patients develop genito-urinary symptoms, including:

- pain on urinating
- genito-urinary discharge
- in women, abdominal pain, vaginal bleeding during or after sex, or between periods
- in men, testicular pain or swelling

How do you get chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a bacterial infection that is usually spread through sex or contact with infected genital fluids. It is also possible for it to be transmitted during pregnancy to the baby. Chlamydia is not transmitted through casual or social contact, or from sharing baths, towels, toilet seats or swimming.

Is chlamydia serious?

Although chlamydia doesn't usually cause any symptoms and can normally be treated with a short course of antibiotics, it can be serious if it's not treated early on. The eye inflammation will persist until effective treatment is started. Once you are treated, the eye inflammation settles quickly and does not leave any lasting damage to your eye or vision. This is why it's very important to get tested and treated as soon as possible if you think you might have chlamydia.

If left untreated, the infection can spread to other parts of your body and lead to long-term health problems, such as pelvic inflammatory disease, epididymo-orchitis (inflammation of the testicles), and infertility. It can also sometimes cause arthritis.

Getting tested for chlamydia

Testing for chlamydia is carried out via a urine test or a swab test. Anyone can get a free and confidential chlamydia test at iCaSH (Integrated Contraception & Sexual Health) or a GP surgery.

iCaSH (Integrated Contraception & Sexual Health clinic) services are available in Norfolk and Suffolk locations at the following addresses: The Great Yarmouth area is served by the Breydon Clinic based at Northgate Hospital, Northgate Street, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR30 1BU. **For an appointment please ring 0300 300 3030 between 9am-5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am-1pm Friday.** Out of hours contact www.icash.nhs.uk for details.

The Lowestoft area is served by iCaSH based at 6 Regent Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1PA. For an appointment contact them by **telephone on 0300 123 3650 from 9am-5pm Monday to Thursday and 10.30am-2pm Saturday.** Out of hours contact www.suffolksexualhealth.co.uk.

Great Yarmouth “walk – in” times		Lowestoft “walk-in” times	
Monday	2-3pm	Monday	9.30am-12pm
Tuesday	9-10am	Tuesday	3.30-7pm
Thursday	2-3pm	Wednesday	1pm–5pm
Friday	9-10am	Saturday	10.30am–2pm

How is chlamydia treated?

Chlamydia can usually be treated easily with antibiotics. You may be given some tablets to take all on one day, or a longer course to take for a week. This normally cures the infection in all parts of your body including your eye. You shouldn't have sex until you and your current sexual partner have finished your treatment. If you had the one-day course of treatment, you should avoid having sex for a week afterwards.

It's important that your current sexual partner and any other sexual partners you've had during the last six months are also tested and treated to help stop the spread of the infection. iCaSH clinics can help you contact your sexual partners. Either you or the clinic can speak to them, or they can be sent a note advising them to get tested. The note won't have your name on it, so your confidentiality will be protected.

Where can I find out more?

If you have more questions, the staff in the eye clinic or iCaSH are there to provide confidential advice. There is also information available online at: www.nhs.uk/conditions/chlamydia.

Prepared using information available on NHS Choices.

For more information contact

Manager, Ophthalmology Out Patient Department

Telephone: 01493 452121

Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible. Please talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/ department staff are unable to resolve your concern, please ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care. **Before you leave the hospital you will be asked to complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.** Providing your feedback is vital in helping to transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

Trust Values

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courtesy and respect • A welcoming and positive attitude • Polite, friendly and interested in people • Value and respect people as individuals So people feel welcome Attentively kind and helpful • Look out for dignity, privacy & humanity • Attentive, responsive & take time to help • Visible presence of staff to provide care So people feel cared for | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsive communication • Listen to people & answer their questions • Keep people clearly informed • Involve people So people feel in control Effective and professional • Safe, knowledgeable and reassuring • Effective care / services from joined up teams • Organised and timely, looking to improve So people feel safe |
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The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240