

Chlamydial conjunctivitis



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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 do not notice any symptoms and do not 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 does not usually cause any symptoms and can normally be treated with a short course of antibiotics, it can be serious if it is 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 services are available in Norfolk and Suffolk locations. The Great Yarmouth area is served by the Breydon Clinic based at Northgate Hospital, Northgate Street, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR30 1BU.

The Lowestoft area is served by iCaSH based at 6 Regent Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1PA.

For an appointment please call iCASH at: 0300 300 3030.

You can also find out more at www.icash.nhs.uk

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 should not 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 one week afterwards.

It is important that your current sexual partner and any other sexual partners you have 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. www.icash.nhs.uk

There is also information available online at: www.nhs.uk/conditions/chlamydia Prepared using information available on the NHS website.

For more information please contact the Ophthalmology outpatient department on 01493 452121.

Your Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible - talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/department staff are unable to resolve it, then ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care.

Before leaving please complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.

Help us transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

OUR VALUES

Collaboration

We work positively with others to achieve shared aims

Accountability

We act with professionalism and integrity, delivering what we commit to, embedding learning when things do not go to plan

Respect

We are anti-discriminatory, treating people fairly and creating a sense of belonging and pride

Empowerment

We speak out when things don't feel right, we are innovative and make changes to support continuous improvement

Support

We are compassionate, listen attentively and are kind to ourselves and each other



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