National Chlamydia Screening Programme

You may not know you have it!
Choose chlamydia testing

What is chlamydia?

Chlamydia is the most commonly diagnosed sexually transmitted infection (STI) in the UK. It's most common in men and women under 25 years old. The bacteria that cause chlamydia are found in the semen, vaginal fluids and saliva of people who have the infection. Chlamydia is easily passed from one person to another through unprotected sex (e.g. not using a condom).

Why is chlamydia a problem?

If chlamydia is not treated it can cause pain in the pelvis, ectopic pregnancy (a pregnancy in the fallopian tubes) and infertility (being unable to have children). This risk is increased if you get the infection again and again.

Most people with chlamydia don't get any symptoms. If you do get symptoms you might notice:

- Unusual vaginal discharge
- Pain when peeing or having sex
- Bleeding after sex or between periods
- Pelvic pain (pain in the lower part of the stomach) or painful testicles

If you have any of these symptoms you should see a health professional, even if you have tested negative for chlamydia as you may have a different infection.

How regularly should I get a chlamydia test?

If you are under 25 years old and sexually active, you should get tested for chlamydia annually or when you change your sexual partner.

Where can I get a free chlamydia test?

- GP surgeries
- Community pharmacies
- Sexual health clinics
- Home sampling kits via the internet/texting services

What is the chlamydia test?

The test is free and simple. All you need to do is give a urine sample or a self–taken vaginal swab. You do not need to be examined. You may be asked to fill in a form – ask for help if you want. We will also need a way of contacting you with your results. This can be your address, mobile number or e-mail. It is important to understand that no medical test is 100 per cent accurate. However, it is rare for the chlamydia test result to be wrong. If you are concerned discuss this when you get your results.

The test is confidential. Even if you are under 16 you still have the same rights to confidentiality as anyone else. In exceptional circumstances, like when a doctor or health worker thinks you might be in serious danger, they might feel there is a need to pass information on but they must talk to you first before they tell anyone else. This applies to everyone, no matter what age you are.

An organisation called Public Health England counts how many people in England have chlamydia and other STIs. We will send them details of your test results, but not your name or contact details.

What if I have chlamydia?

If you have chlamydia you will be given antibiotics to treat the infection (do tell us if you could be pregnant, as you may need different antibiotics). Some people experience side effects on antibiotic treatment, the most common of which is an upset stomach. The people you have had sex with recently should also be tested.

It is a good idea to get tested again about 3 months after you finish your treatment. This is because it's been shown people who have chlamydia once are more likely to get it again, and that repeat infections increase the risk of developing serious health consequences. You may be contacted again about the option of getting re-tested. It's also important you follow the safer sex advice below.

How do I protect myself from chlamydia and other STIs?

You can reduce your risk of getting or passing on chlamydia, or other STIs, by:
- Always using a condom when having sex with casual and new partners
- Reducing your number of sexual partners and avoiding overlapping sexual relationships
- Getting screened for chlamydia every year, and on change of sexual partner.

For more information and to find out where you can get a test locally:
- Visit NHS Choices for information on where to find local testing services
  http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Chlamydia/Pages/Introduction.aspx
- Call the Sexual Health Help Line: 0300 123 7123 , minicom: 0800 521 361

Last updated: July 2017