

Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT): Chlamydia

URGENT and PRIVATE

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR HEALTH

You have received this handout because your partner was diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection (STI) called Chlamydia. You may also be infected. This infection is serious but can be easily treated with antibiotics. Your partner has been evaluated by a healthcare provider and received treatment. It is very important that you are treated as well.

Your partner gave you a prescription written by a healthcare provider to treat this infection. Please read all the information in this handout before taking the medicine. **In particular, read the information about the medicine called azithromycin.** After reading the information, fill the prescription at the pharmacy and take all the medicine. You should also see a healthcare provider to be evaluated.

What is Chlamydia

Chlamydia (klah MIDD ee ah) is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by the bacteria (germ) *Chlamydia trachomatis*. You can get Chlamydia from having any kind of sex (oral, vaginal, or anal) with a person who has the infection. If Chlamydia is not treated, it can be very serious.

Why Chlamydia Is Harmful

In females, the infection may spread to the uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries. This infection is called PID (pelvic inflammatory disease). This may cause:

- long-term pain
- problems with pregnancy
- sterility (unable to have babies)

If a woman who is already pregnant gets Chlamydia, it can be passed to her baby during birth. Chlamydia can cause eye infections or pneumonia in the newborn baby.

In males, Chlamydia can cause an infection of the urinary tube (urethra). If it is not treated, it can spread to the tube that carries sperm (epididymis). The infection can make a male sterile (unable to father a child).

Symptoms

Chlamydia can be in the body for a long time without any symptoms. That is why it is easily spread without your knowing it. Even if a person does not have symptoms, Chlamydia can damage the reproductive organs.

Women

Most women do not have symptoms. Some women experience:

- burning with urination
- vaginal discharge
- Lower belly pain with fever, chills or vomiting. These are signs of a more serious infection.
- pain or bleeding with sex
- irregular bleeding between periods

Men

Most men do not have symptoms. Some men experience:

- painful urination
- watery discharge from the penis

Testing for Chlamydia

Women

If you do not have symptoms, a urine sample or a vaginal sample may be taken to test for Chlamydia.

If you do have symptoms, the doctor or nurse practitioner will examine your vaginal area. He or she will take a sample of your discharge and send it to the laboratory to test for the infection.

Men

A urine sample is collected to test for Chlamydia.

Preventing Future Infection

- Respect yourself and your partner.
- Limit the number of sexual partners. Know your partner and his or her sexual history.
- ALWAYS USE A LATEX CONDOM. Use it correctly. Use it every time you have sex, the whole time you have sex.
- Be prepared. Have another condom available in case the one you are using breaks.
- All sexually active teens should be tested for STIs at least once a year even if there are no symptoms.

Treatment: Azithromycin

- You received a prescription for a medicine to treat this infection. It is called azithromycin (sometimes called “Zithromax”). This prescription can be filled at any pharmacy.
- Azithromycin is an antibiotic. It kills the germ that causes Chlamydia.
- People can have more than one infection at the same time. Azithromycin will not cure other infections. See a doctor as soon as possible to get tested for other STIs.
- Having an infection like Chlamydia may increase your risk of getting HIV. Make sure to also get an HIV test.

How to Take This Medicine

- You have been prescribed azithromycin 1000 mg for one dose.
- Read the label carefully. This is a one-time dose. That means that all the medicine should be taken at the same time.
- You can take this medicine with or without food. Taking with food prevents common side effects (see below under **Side Effects Warnings**).
- If you vomit the medicine within 1 hour after taking it, call the doctor who wrote the prescription. You may need another dose.

The medicine is very safe. However, **DO NOT TAKE IT if any of these things are true:**

- You are female and have lower belly pain, pain during sex, vomiting, or fever. You should see a health care provider as soon as possible if you have any of these symptoms.
- You are male and have pain or swelling in the testicles or a fever. You should see a health care provider as soon as possible if you have any of these symptoms.
- You think you might be pregnant or you are breastfeeding. You should talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking this medication.
- **You have an allergy to azithromycin or any medicines like this one.** Tell your doctor about the allergy and your symptoms. These may be:
 - rash
 - hives
 - itching
 - shortness of breath, wheezing or cough
 - swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat
- You have turned yellow or developed side effects related to your liver when taking this.
- You have a serious long-term illness, such as kidney, heart, or liver disease.
- You have long QT on ECG, low magnesium levels, low potassium levels.
- You have a slow heartbeat or you are on any medicine that may change your heartbeat.

If you have any of these, or if you are not sure, do not take this medicine. Instead, talk to your doctor as soon as possible. Your doctor will find the best treatment for you.

Side Effects Warnings

Common side effects include:

- stomach pain
- nausea or vomiting
- diarrhea

When to Call the Doctor

Call your doctor right away if you have any of these serious side effects:

- nausea or vomiting
- dark colored urine
- jaundice (yellow skin and eyes)
- upper abdomen pain on the right side
- skin rash
- fatigue

When to call for Emergency Help

Call for emergency help (911) if you have any of these signs of an **allergic reaction**:

- trouble breathing
- swelling of the tongue, lips or throat
- swelling of hands, feet or ankles

Following Treatment of Chlamydia

- **Do not have sex for the next seven days.** During those first seven days, you can pass on the infection to your sex partner.
- If you have sex without a condom or if a condom breaks, you can also get re-infected.
- If you have any other sex partners, tell them you are being treated for Chlamydia. They need to get treatment, too.
- **Schedule a follow-up appointment to be re-tested in 3 months.** It is important to get re-tested. People who are infected with Chlamydia once are more likely to get it again.

More Information

- If you have any questions, call the Adolescent Medicine Clinic at 614-722-2450.
- You may call the National STD Hotline at 800-227-8922, 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- Visit the website <http://www.ashastd.org/sitemap.cfm>.