CHLAMYDIA

What is it?

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted infection caused by bacteria. In females, chlamydia can cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), a serious infection of the uterus and fallopian tubes. PID increases the risk of ectopic or tubal pregnancy and can lead to infertility. In males, chlamydia can cause difficulty passing urine and lead to sterility. Chlamydia can also cause infection of the eyes, throat, joints and bloodstream.

Chlamydia is a reportable infection and must be reported to the Health Department.

How is it spread?

Chlamydia is spread by direct contact with sexual fluids of an infected person, through anal, oral or vaginal intercourse. A female with chlamydia can pass the infection on to her newborn at the time of delivery.

What do I look for?

Often times there are no symptoms in men and women, however, males may experience a burning sensation during urination, discharge from the penis, and tenderness of the testicles. Symptoms in females may include a burning sensation during urination, vaginal discharge, lower abdominal pain and abnormal vaginal bleeding.

How do you test for it?

A urine sample can be sent to the lab to test for chlamydia. A swab from the penis, cervix, throat, or rectum may also be taken.
How do you treat it?
Chlamydia is treated with antibiotics. It is important that the antibiotics are taken as directed otherwise the infection may not be cured. There is no effect on breastfeeding with this treatment. Treatment must be completed as prescribed even if you no longer have symptoms.

How can I protect myself?
Chlamydia can be spread to other sexual partners as soon as you become infected. It is important to tell all sexual partners within the past 60 days that you are infected. They will need to be tested and if necessary, receive treatment. If you prefer, a nurse from the Health Department can contact your partner(s). All information including your name will be kept confidential.

It is recommended that you return to your health care provider a month after treatment for a repeat test to be sure your infection is gone. You can have sex again when you and your partner(s) have finished treatment and are no longer infectious.

- Take antibiotics as directed until finished
- Avoid drinking alcohol while being treated with antibiotics
- Use condoms with lubricant to lower the chance of infections in the future