# A Freshers guide to chlamydia.. And how not to catch it!

Submitted by: C Click Ltd t/a Chemist Click
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Freshers week is well underway, and it is estimated that over 500,00 students have been enrolled onto university courses across the country. It has been reported that around a quarter of students will catch an STD within their first year, with chlamydia (https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chlamydia/) being the most common one.

What is Chlamydia?
Chlamydia is an STD caused by the spread of Chlamydia Trachomatis, a type of bacteria. It is one of the most common STD's, spread through sexual activity.

How do you get Chlamydia?
Chlamydia is spread when an infected person engages in sexual activity with a non-infected individual.
You can get chlamydia by:
• Unprotected sex (including vaginal, anal and oral)
• Using sex toys that haven't been washed after having been used by someone infected with chlamydia
• Your genitals coming into contact with an infected person's genitals (this includes dry sex)
• Your eyes coming into contact with an infected person's genital fluid (cum)
You cannot get chlamydia from:
• Hugging, kissing or sharing a bed
• Swimming pools, baths or toilet seats
• Sharing towels or clothes

What are the symptoms of Chlamydia?
Around 70% of women and 50% of men do not experience symptoms (https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chlamydia/symptoms/) of chlamydia, which is why it is important to get screened regularly if you are sexually active. However, some people may experience symptoms which usually appear within 1-3 weeks after having contracted the infection.
Symptoms of chlamydia can include:
• Painful sex
• Pain whilst urinating
• Lower stomach pain
• A milky/yellowish discharge from the vagina that has a strong smell
• Bleeding after sex or in between sex
• Discharge from the penis
• Swollen or tender testicles
• Pain or discharge from the anus
It is important to remember that chlamydia symptoms aren't always present and you should get tested regularly, especially if you have numerous sexual partners.

Where can I get tested?
All universities offer a free chlamydia screening service. You can visit your university GP practice who will give you more information on how to get tested. Alternatively, you can visit your local GUM clinic (https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Sexual-health-services/LocationSearch/1847) or get tested using an

online STD screening service (https://www.chemistclick.co.uk/treatment/std-tests).

What happens if Chlamydia is left untreated?
If left untreated, chlamydia can cause health problems such as reactive arthritis (where your joints become painful and inflamed). In females, it can cause Pelvic Inflammatory Disease which can cause pain in the pelvic region and could potentially cause damage to the reproductive system (including infertility). In males, untreated chlamydia can spread to the testicles causing them to become swollen and inflamed, and may also lead to infertility.

How is Chlamydia treated?
The good news is that Chlamydia can be treated easily with a short course of antibiotics (https://www.chemistclick.co.uk/treatment/chlamydia). Most treatments are a one-off course of antibiotics that are taken once as a single dose, however, there are other treatment options which last for one week. Depending on your medical history (e.g allergies, pre-existing medical conditions), you may be prescribed either one.
Your body is unable to get rid of chlamydia naturally, so it's important to use antibiotics as soon as possible to prevent further complications. Most people do not experience side-effects from treatment.
It is important not to have sex throughout the course of your treatment and for one week after, as you may still be carrying traces of the bacteria in your system.

When can I have sex again?
If you've just been treated for chlamydia, you should avoid vaginal, oral or anal sex for 7 days after having finished your treatment course. It takes most people around 7 days to get rid of chlamydia completely, however, you may want to get retested to make sure. It is important to let your sexual partners know if you've contracted chlamydia, so that they can get treated too and avoid re-infecting you (or others).

How can I avoid getting chlamydia?
• Use a condom every time you have vaginal, anal or oral sex
• Use a dam (thin piece of soft plastic or latex) to cover the vagina during oral sex or dry sex
• Do not share sex toys (or wash them thoroughly before use)

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*This has been written by one of our pharmacists



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