



Sexual & Reproductive Health Day · February 12, 2010
Journée de sensibilisation à la santé sexuelle et génésique · Le 12 février 2010

Chlamydia Basics

Chlamydia is a very common sexually transmitted infection that is caused by a bacterium. There is a continuing need to address Chlamydia and other sexually transmitted infections across the country. The statistics paint a picture of why Chlamydia is a growing concern:

- Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted bacterial infection that is costly to the individual, and to Canada's health care system
- In 2006, there were nearly 70,000 reported cases of Chlamydia in Canadians between the ages of 14 and 25.
- Reported rates of Chlamydia in Canada have increased by nearly 78% in the past 10 years.
- Nearly 70% of Chlamydia cases are in women under 24 years of age.

Thousands of Canadians have Chlamydia and don't know it. The symptoms of Chlamydia are not always obvious. If detected on time, Chlamydia can be cured with antibiotics; however, Chlamydia is very serious if left untreated. In women, it can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease (an infection in the uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries) which can cause infertility or tubal pregnancy (pregnancy in the fallopian tubes instead of the uterus). In men, the infection can spread to the testicles or prostate gland and may cause sterility (not being able to father a child).

If there are symptoms, for women they may include a new or different discharge from the vagina, lower abdominal pain, unusual pain or bleeding during or after sex. 70% of women with Chlamydia have no symptoms.

If there are symptoms in men, they may include a cloudy or milky discharge from the penis, pain in the testicles or pain in the lower abdomen. 50% of men with Chlamydia have no symptoms.

Since 70% of women and 50% of men with Chlamydia have no symptoms and may not realize they have it, routine testing is extremely important. Testing for Chlamydia is done by either taking a swab of the suspected infected area or through a urine test.

Chlamydia is preventable, and easily treated. It can be prevented by following safer sex practices such as using a condom or dental dam when engaging in vaginal, anal or oral sex.