

CHLAMYDIA AND LYMPHOGRANULOMA VENEREUM (LGV)

WHAT IS CHLAMYDIA AND LGV?

Chlamydia is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections (STI's). It is a bacteria that can infect the vagina, cervix, urethra and other reproductive organs, as well as the throat and rectum.

Lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV) is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by a type of the chlamydia trachomatis bacteria. LGV often causes a more serious infection.

SYMPTOMS OF CHLAMYDIA

Many people infected with chlamydia have no symptoms. Chlamydia can affect the vagina, cervix and urethra, the rectum, throat, and even the eyes. It can also cause LGV.

Individuals may unknowingly pass the infection on to their sexual partner(s). If symptoms develop, they usually appear two to six weeks after sexual contact with an infected person.

Symptoms of vaginal/cervical chlamydia include vaginal itching or increased discharge from the vagina. People may also have bleeding during or after sexual intercourse, bleeding, or spotting between menstrual periods.

People may have pain in the lower, urethral or penile discharge and itching (urethra is the opening in the penis.) Individuals may also experience burning when passing urine, frequent passing of urine, or pain and swelling in the testicles.

Symptoms of rectal chlamydia can include rectal itching or pain, discharge from the anal area, diarrhea, and possible bloody stools.

Symptoms of throat (pharyngeal) chlamydia can include chronic sore throat, cough, swollen lymph nodes, and/or fever.

SYMPTOMS OF LGV

Between three to thirty days after infection with the bacteria, a painless sore/lump may develop on the vagina, penis, rectum, cervix or mouth. The sore may disappear on its own, even though the infection is still there. Two to six weeks later, the bacterium affects the whole body. People may experience symptoms such as: fever, chills, fatigue and muscle and joint aches, swollen and painful gland in the genital area, bloody discharge from the rectum and bloody diarrhea.

HOW IT SPREADS

Chlamydia and LGV spread through unprotected oral, anal or vaginal sex with an infected person. Sometimes, chlamydia can be spread to the eyes by the hands following direct contact with the infected fluids. It can also be passed from an infected individual to the baby during childbirth.

TESTING

Swabs can be used to test the cervix, urethra, vagina, rectum, and throat (depending on where the infection is thought to be).

If a person is testing through the giving of a urine sample, it is important that they do not pass urine for a minimum of one hour before the clinic appointment for testing.

TREATMENT

- Chlamydia is treated with antibiotic pills that are taken all at once or for seven days; it is important you complete the treatment as directed by your health care provider
- Even if your symptoms have disappeared, you must finish all the pills to make sure you are cured
- To reduce the risk of reinfection, abstaining from sexual contact for seven days following treatment is recommended
- If you have pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) or epididymitis, you may need to visit a hospital and be treated with intravenous antibiotics
- LGV is treated with three weeks of antibiotic pills

FOLLOW-UP

- Your last sexual partner and all sexual partners within the past 60 days should be examined and treated. Tell your partner(s) that having no symptoms does not mean there is no infection. A York Region public health nurse can help you notify your partner(s). Your name will be kept confidential.
- A follow-up test is recommended for rectal chlamydia infections one month after you have completed the treatment to make sure that you are cured.

FOLLOW-UP FOR LGV

It is important to return for a follow-up visit three to five weeks after treatment to make sure the infection is gone. If you think you may have LGV or have had sex with someone who has LGV, please see your health care provider for more information.

COMPLICATIONS

Untreated chlamydia may lead to a condition called pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). PID is a serious infection of the lining of the uterus, fallopian tubes, and ovaries.

Scar tissue may block or partially block the fallopian tubes. Untreated chlamydia and LGV may increase risk for ectopic pregnancy and miscarriages. Untreated chlamydia may lead to sterility if the tubes carrying the sperm are blocked by scar tissue. Individuals may have swelling and pain in their testicles, a condition called epididymitis. If left untreated, chlamydia can cause rashes, sores, and joint pain.

Untreated LGV can cause scarring and deformity in the genital, cervical or anal area, depending on the location of the infection. In rare cases, it may lead to inflammation and infection of the brain and spinal cord tissues, hepatitis and even death.

Chlamydia is a reportable infection. York Region Community and Health Services must be notified so appropriate case and follow-up can be completed. Always use a condom from beginning to end of all sexual contact to reduce your risk

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- York Region Public Health Sexual Health Clinics **1-800-361-5653, # 1**
- sexandu.ca