

## **CHLAMYDIA**

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) which is contracted through sexual activity, which means contact between the genital organs or the genital organ and the mucous membrane in the mouth or rectum. This infection is caused by bacteria which thrive in the mucous membrane in the genitals, the urethra and rectum. The bacteria can also cause infection in the mucous membrane of the eyes.

Proper use of a condom will protect against catching the disease. The condom must be on during the entire intercourse.

### **SYMPTOMS**

Most persons who are infected with chlamydia do not have any complaints and therefore are not aware that they are infected. Chlamydia may not cause any symptoms for a long time, perhaps not for several years. Thus recently discovered chlamydia does not necessarily mean that a partner has been unfaithful.

Both men and women can experience a burning sensation when urinating, which can easily be misunderstood as a symptom of cystitis, catarrh of the bladder, which is a common complaint in young women, but a rare condition in young men. In rare cases chlamydia may attack the joints.

Women may experience that their discharge from the vagina changes or that they have small bleedings in connection with intercourse or between menstrual periods. The chlamydia bacteria can spread to the fallopian tubes and cause an infection which could lead to sterility and chronic gynaecological complaints. It is therefore important to discover the disease in time so that it can be treated. Symptoms that suggest the disease is spreading to the fallopian tubes can be pain in the lower stomach area and fever. With such symptoms quick treatment is necessary.

If a woman has chlamydia when she gives birth, the baby might be infected. This can cause inflammation of the eyes or pneumonia.

Men may have a burning sensation in and discharge from the urethra, a rash on the head of the penis and light pain in the base of the penis. If the chlamydia bacteria spread to the appendix testicles (epididymis) it can cause an infection in the scrotum which then will be painful, red and swollen.

### **EXAMINATION**

Tests to show the presence of the chlamydia bacteria are taken with a cotton swab from the urethra and the cervix. Chlamydia can also be found through a urine test. This is an examination method that has now been introduced in a number of places.

Anyone suffering from complaints that indicate that they might have chlamydia should be examined. In addition, all young women and men should be examined if they have had new partners since the previous chlamydia test.

### **TREATMENT**

Chlamydia is treated with antibiotics. One must not have intercourse during the treatment and must also refrain from having sex for a week after the treatment has been completed.

A check-up a few weeks after completion of the treatment is recommended.

### **FREE EXAMINATION AND TREATMENT**

Chlamydia is defined as a disease in the Act relating to control of communicable diseases. Therefore anyone suffering from this disease is entitled to a free examination and treatment. It is important to inform current and former partners that you have been infected. The doctor and patient must cooperate on tracing all sexual contacts of the patient to establish if any have been infected and require treatment.