Chlamydia and gonorrhea are very common sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) that are caused by bacteria. In the United States, about 3 million people get chlamydia each year, and about 650,000 people get gonorrhea. Chlamydia and gonorrhea can infect both men and women.

**How do I know if I have it?**
People with chlamydia (cla-MIH-dee-ah) often have no symptoms at all, making it hard to detect. If a person does have symptoms, the symptoms usually start within one to three weeks after sexual contact with someone who carries the germs. Symptoms include pain while urinating (peeing) and unusual mucus or pus coming from the vagina, penis, or anus.

People with gonorrhea (gone-o-RHEE-a) will usually have symptoms within 2 to 10 days after being infected. Like chlamydia, gonorrhea causes unusual mucus or pus and pain when you urinate (pee). Women can also have fever and chills, pain in the lower belly, and irregular menstrual bleeding. However, some people can have gonorrhea without showing symptoms.

**How do I get infected?**
Chlamydia and gonorrhea are both passed by contact with infected semen (cum), vaginal fluids, or rectal discharge during vaginal, anal, and oral sex. Gonorrhea can also infect the throat if you perform oral sex on an infected partner. A sore throat can be a symptom of an oral gonorrhea infection, and anal itching or discharge may be symptoms of a rectal gonorrhea infection. Chlamydia and gonorrhea can also infect other areas of the body, such as the eyes. A pregnant woman with chlamydia or gonorrhea can pass the diseases to her baby during childbirth.

**How do I get tested for it?**
There are two ways to test for chlamydia and gonorrhea. One test uses a sample of urine. Another test uses a swab to collect a small amount of fluid from the man’s penis or the woman’s cervix (the opening to the uterus).

**Who should be tested?**
You should be tested:
- every year if you are sexually active and under the age of 24
- if you have had oral, vaginal, or anal sex without a condom
- if you have any of the symptoms
- if you have any reason to think that you may have been exposed to chlamydia, gonorrhea, or any other STD

**Is there a treatment?**
Yes. Chlamydia and gonorrhea can be treated and cured with several different antibiotics. If you are given pills, it is very important to take all of them. If you don’t take all the pills, the symptoms may go away, but you may still have the infection. Sometimes, your doctor or other medical professional may want you to come back for another appointment to make sure that you are cured. It is important to keep your follow-up appointment.

Once you know that you have chlamydia or gonorrhea, it’s very important to tell anyone you have had sex with so...
Chlamydia and Gonorrhea

How to use a condom

1. When the penis is hard, squeeze the tip of the rolled up condom and place on the head of the penis.
2. Hold the tip and press air out as you unroll completely. (Air bubbles can break condoms.)
3. Use water-based lubrication.
4. After ejaculation (“cumming”), hold the base of the condom and pull out while the penis is hard. Move away from your partner to remove the condom in case semen spills out of the condom. Never reuse a condom.

What if I’m under 18?
If you are between the ages of 12 and 18, you can be treated for sexually transmitted diseases or obtain birth control in California and some other states without your parents’ permission. California state law requires that Kaiser Permanente must protect your privacy.

How can I protect myself from chlamydia and gonorrhea?
Whenever you start a new sexual relationship, it’s important to talk honestly and openly with your partner about whether either one of you might have a sexually transmitted disease.

It’s possible to have been infected with chlamydia, gonorrhea, HIV, or other STDs and have no symptoms, so it is best to always be safe. Latex condoms, when used correctly, can help to protect you and your partner from many STDs. Other birth control methods—such as the pill, Depo-Provera, emergency contraception (Plan B), spermicides, and diaphragms—do not protect you from STDs.

Call your doctor or other medical professional if you have symptoms of chlamydia or gonorrhea or if you just want to be tested for STDs. We are here to help you. Most medical professionals do tests based on what you tell them. Talking to them honestly about your sex life will help them to give you the best care possible.

What happens if I don’t get treated?
If you don’t get treated, gonorrhea can spread into the blood and cause joint pain, skin sores, or heart damage. Both chlamydia and gonorrhea can spread into a woman’s uterus and fallopian tubes, and cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). PID can lead to infertility (difficulty getting pregnant), debilitating pelvic pain and life-threatening ectopic pregnancies. Chlamydia or gonorrhea can cause fertility problems in men, too. These diseases can also cause problems during pregnancy that may lead to eye or lung infections in the baby, or even death. Once found, however, chlamydia and gonorrhea are usually easily cured.

The only way to know for sure if you have chlamydia or gonorrhea is to get tested. You should see your doctor or other medical professional right away if you think you may have been exposed or if you have any symptoms.

Should I get tested for anything else?
It is important to also be tested for other sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV, syphilis, and hepatitis. Talk to your doctor or other medical professional about getting tested for these diseases, as well.

What to do if you are hit, hurt, or threatened by a partner or spouse, this can seriously affect your health. There is help. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or connect to ndvh.org.

Additional resources
• Connect to our Web site at kp.org to access health and drug encyclopedias, interactive programs, health classes, and more.
• Contact your local Kaiser Permanente Health Education Center or Department for health information, programs, and other resources.
• Call the Center for Disease Control Contact Center at 1-800-232-4636.
• If you are hit, hurt, or threatened by a partner or spouse, this can seriously affect your health. There is help. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or connect to ndvh.org.

This information is not intended to diagnose or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor. If you have questions or need more information about your medication, please speak to your pharmacist. Kaiser Permanente does not endorse the medications or products mentioned. Any trade names listed are for easy identification only.

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