

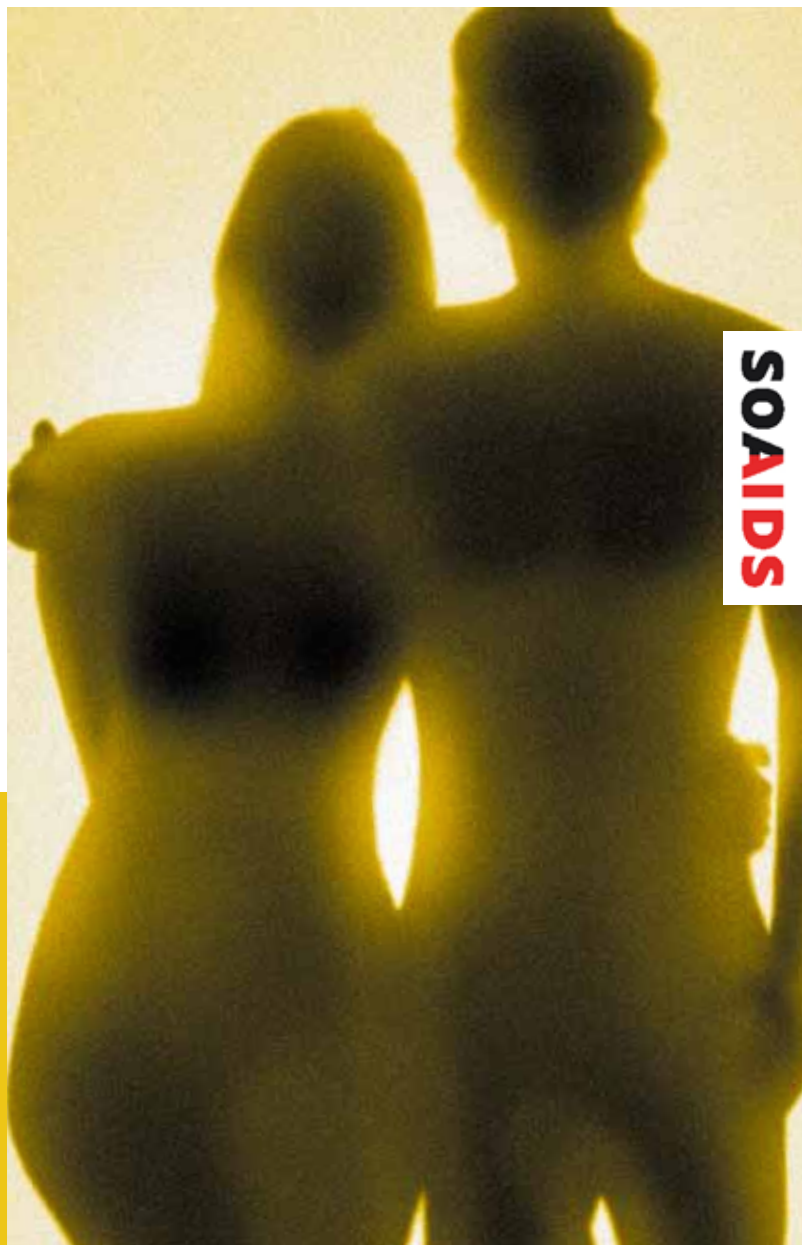
Warning partners

All sexual partners in the six weeks before the symptoms began should be warned. They should also be tested and, if necessary, treated. If you didn't have any symptoms, then all sexual partners from the past six months should be warned.

More information about chlamydia

Further information about chlamydia and other STIs is available on the Soa Aids Nederland (STI AIDS Netherlands) website. Soa Aids Nederland is a centre of expertise for HIV infection and other STIs. The www.soa aids.nl website gives detailed information on HIV and other STIs. Young people can visit the Dutch information site www.sense.info.

Chlamydia



0511

For answers to your questions on STIs, call the AIDS STI Infoline

0900-204 204 0 (10 cents per minute)

Mon – Wed 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Thurs and Fri 2 – 8 p.m.

or send an e-mail to: infolijn@soa aids.nl

Soa Aids Nederland makes every effort to provide information in all its publications that is as accurate and reliable as possible. However, Soa Aids Nederland cannot accept liability for damage caused by making use of the leaflet. The information in our publications may never be considered a substitute for a consultation or personal talk with a doctor or specialist.

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted infection (STI). It is the most common STI in the Netherlands. The infection is caused by bacteria. Chlamydia bacteria can live in the mucous membrane (skin) of the vagina, cervix, anus or urethra (where the urine comes out). Once you've caught the infection, it can spread through your body and cause various symptoms. Chlamydia is passed on by sexual contact. Not only during penetrative sex, but also from direct contact between the mucous membrane of the genitals. Using condoms greatly reduces the risk of infection. Chlamydia is easy to treat with a course of antibiotics.

Symptoms

In women: 70 per cent of women infected with chlamydia have no obvious signs or symptoms. This means that someone can be infected with chlamydia for years, and infecting others, without realising it. If there are any symptoms, these are usually an increase in vaginal discharge or a burning sensation when passing urine. Sometimes there's some vaginal bleeding between periods, discharge containing blood after sex, or lower abdominal pain. If the infection is in the anus, this could cause symptoms like itching, pain or slimy discharge from the anus.

In men: Men may also not notice that they have become infected with chlamydia. Sometimes passing urine may be painful or they'll have some discharge from the penis. If the infection was caused by anal sex, there may be some itching, pain or slimy discharge from the anus. But even without any obvious symptoms, people can still infect others during unprotected sex.

Possible complications of chlamydia

In women: If chlamydia is left untreated, it can spread via the uterus to the fallopian tubes. The tubes become inflamed, and the inflammation can spread to the abdomen. This is called PID (pelvic inflammatory disease). An inflammation of the fallopian tubes may cause a fever and intense lower abdominal pain. It may also leave scarring and blockages in the fallopian tubes. This can cause chronic lower abdominal pain, infertility or an ectopic pregnancy (outside the uterus). If the proper treatment with antibiotics is given quickly, an inflammation of the fallopian tubes will be completely cured.

In men: In men, the inflammation may also spread, but this doesn't happen as often as in women. The bacteria can go via the urethra (urine tube) and the vas deferens (sperm tubes) to the epididymis (in the testicle). This might lead to an inflammation of the epididymis. The inflammation makes the scrotum painful and swollen. Sometimes the man might get a fever too. If he has had a chlamydia infection for a long time, it might have caused scarring and blockages in the urine and sperm tubes. As in women, this may lead to reduced fertility.

Treatment

Chlamydia is easy to treat with antibiotics. Treatment usually consists of a single course of antibiotics. If the infection is in the anus, this could mean taking tablets for one to three weeks. You do not develop any natural immunity to chlamydia after an infection, so you are not protected against new infections. It is therefore easy to catch chlamydia again. That's why it is so important that all sexual partners are tested and treated. And because chlamydia is so common and it is so easy to become re-infected, people should be tested again after six months, especially if they have sex with different partners.