

Chlamydia and Women

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC - safer, healthier people.

[Kathy Maddox] Welcome to this CDC women's health podcast on chlamydia. I'm your host, Kathy Maddox. Chlamydia is one of the most common sexually transmitted diseases, or S-T-Ds, in the United States. Dr. Stuart Berman of CDC's STD Prevention Program joins us to talk about the importance of women being tested for chlamydia. Welcome, Dr. Berman.

[Dr. Berman] Thank you, Kathy.

[Kathy Maddox] Dr. Berman, tell us about chlamydia.

[Dr. Berman] Kathy, chlamydia is most common among young women. Nearly one in 20 sexually active women between the ages of 14 and 19 is infected with chlamydia. Many women with chlamydia don't have any signs and symptoms, so they don't get care or treatment.

[Kathy Maddox] So, what can happen if chlamydia goes untreated?

[Dr. Berman] Chlamydia is easily cured with antibiotics. But without treatment, it can lead to serious health problems. Women can experience pregnancy complications, infertility, chronic pain, and irreversible damage to their reproductive organs. Chlamydia infection may also increase the risk of getting HIV.

[Kathy Maddox] How can a woman prevent chlamydia?

[Dr. Berman] The surest way to prevent STDs – including chlamydia – is not to have sex or only to have sex with someone who's not infected and who only has sex with you. Condoms can reduce your risk of getting chlamydia if used the right way every single time you have sex.

[Kathy Maddox] Should women be tested for chlamydia?

[Dr. Berman] Yes. All sexually active women age 25 or younger should be tested once a year. Women older than 25 should be tested if they have a new sex partner or more than one sex partner. Also, all pregnant women should get tested for chlamydia.

[Kathy Maddox] So, where can a person go to get tested?

[Dr. Berman] If you don't have a regular health care provider, you can find a testing center at www.findstdtest.org.

[Kathy Maddox] What happens if the test is positive for chlamydia?

[Dr. Berman] Usually, an antibiotic will be prescribed to treat the infection. The information should be shared with recent sex partners, so they can get tested and treated too. Everyone being treated should avoid having sex until they've finished their treatment.

[Kathy Maddox] Thank you, Dr. Berman, for explaining the importance of being tested for chlamydia. For more information on chlamydia, please visit www.cdc.gov/std. For more information on women's health, visit www.cdc.gov/women.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov, or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.