

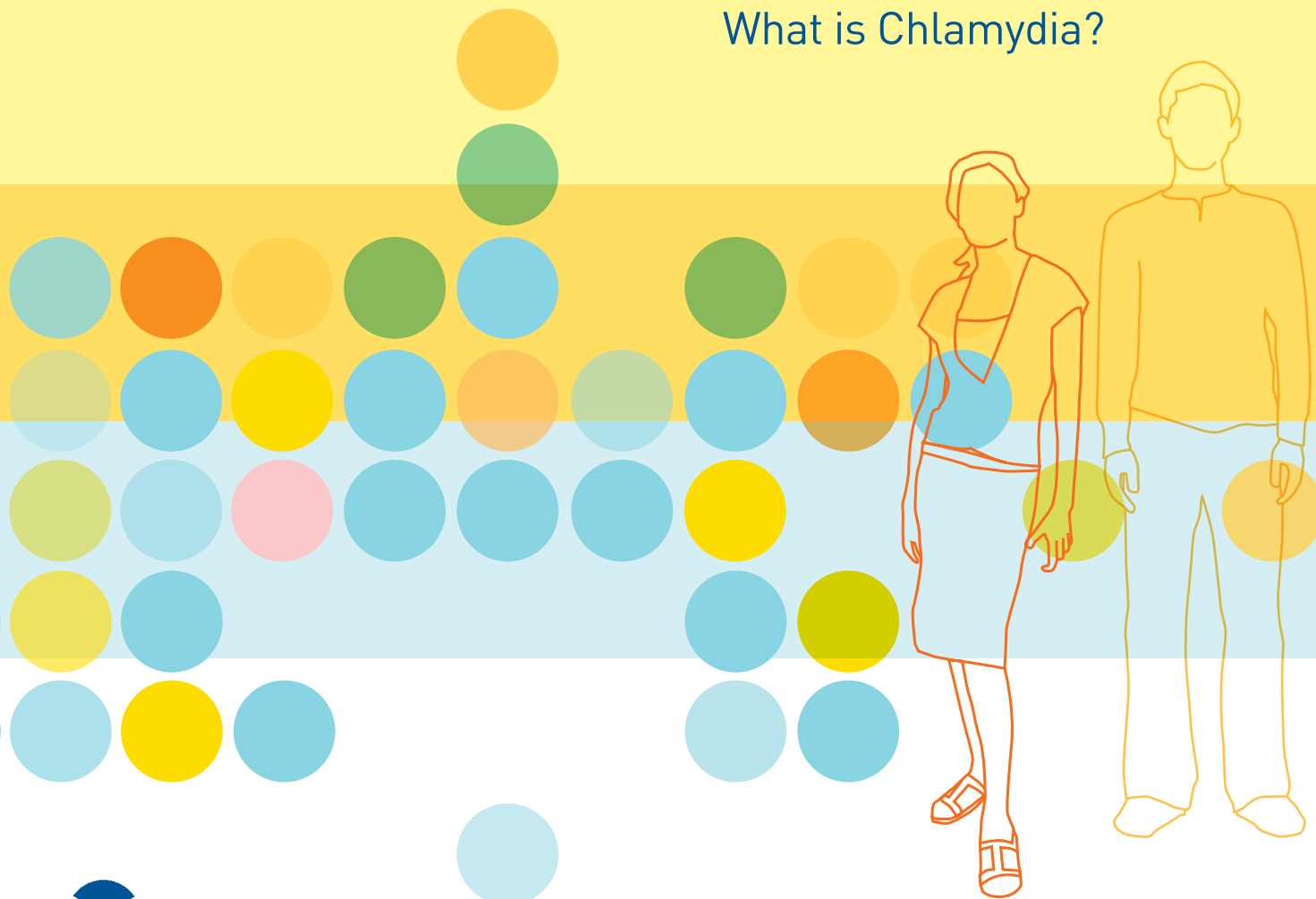
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Further information

You can find further information about chlamydia at www.mshc.org.au.

CHLAMYDIA

What is Chlamydia?



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Victorian Cytology Service

What is Chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a common sexually transmissible infection (STI). If someone has chlamydia they can pass it on to another person during unprotected sex.

Chlamydia can be carried in the:

- cervix (entrance to the uterus at the top of the vagina)
- urethra (the tube which carries urine in men and women)
- rectum (end of large bowel just before anus)

How do I know if I have Chlamydia?

The majority of men and women who have a chlamydia infection don't know they have it because they have **no** symptoms and feel completely well. Only a small number of people with chlamydia have symptoms. These might be:

In women:

- abnormal vaginal bleeding (e.g. bleeding when you are **not** having a period, or bleeding after sex)
- vaginal discharge
- pain in the lower abdomen, particularly during sex
- stinging, pain or burning when urinating

In men:

- penile discharge
- stinging, pain or burning when urinating
- pain in the testes

Who should have a chlamydia test?

- Everyone having sex and under the age of 25 (have the test every 12 months; it's common in this age group)
- Someone with symptoms (see above)
- Men and women with new sexual partners
- MSM¹ (at least every 12 months)
- People diagnosed with another STI
- Someone who has had sex with a new partner overseas



How do you test for Chlamydia?

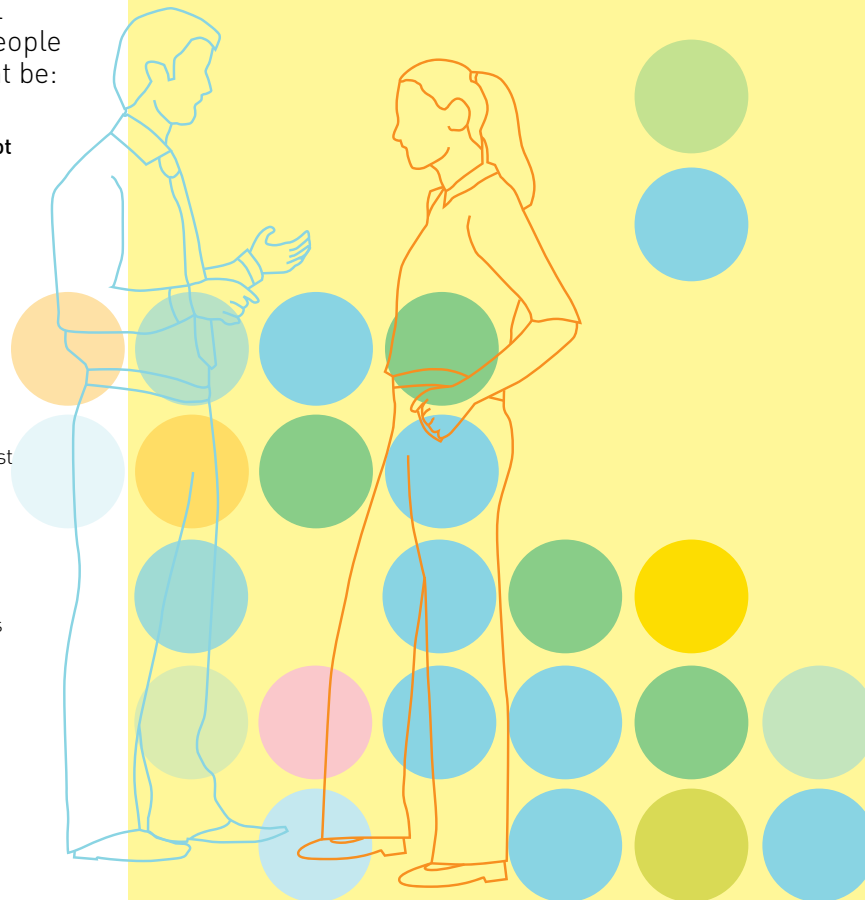
It's simple! If you haven't got any symptoms you just need to pass some urine. You don't need to be examined.

Your health provider will ask you to go into the toilet and urinate into a jar or onto a small sponge. Not much urine is needed but it is important that it's the first part of the flow.

If you have symptoms (see above) your health provider will need to examine you. Tests for chlamydia sometimes need to be taken from the vagina or cervix in women.

When you have your Pap test it's a good time to have a chlamydia test as well.

Most tests from men will be on a urine sample.



How accurate is the test?

No test is 100% accurate. False positives (test is positive when you don't have the infection) and false negatives (test is negative when you do have the infection) occur with all medical tests. The more common an infection is in a particular group, the more accurate the test result will be. In people under the age of 25 without symptoms a positive test is truly positive around 80% of the time; so 1 in 5 positive tests will be falsely positive. However, a negative test is truly negative more than 99% of the time.

Prevention

The best way to prevent infection is to always use condoms with a new partner. And make sure you *both* have a chlamydia test if you want to stop using condoms with your partner.

How is Chlamydia treated?

Chlamydia is treated with antibiotics---usually just 2 tablets taken together. It is important to treat all sexual partners. Talk to your doctor or nurse about this; and have a look at www.letthemknow.org.au for some ideas about telling partners. This is very important as they may not know they have chlamydia infection.

After treatment for a chlamydia infection you should be re-tested 3 months later.

What happens if you don't get treatment?

Untreated Chlamydia can cause problems including infertility and pelvic pain.

In women untreated chlamydia can cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). This is when infection goes into the uterus and the fallopian tubes (the tubes leading from the uterus to the ovaries). This can cause scarring and blockages and could lead to difficulty becoming pregnant.

If the doctor suspects you have PID you will need a longer course of antibiotic treatment---often for a few weeks.

In men untreated chlamydia can infect the testicles causing pain, inflammation and sometimes infertility. Again, in this situation a longer course of antibiotics is needed.