



Preventing Chlamydia Infection

There are two main ways to prevent Chlamydia. An obvious one is to avoid sexual contact that involves penetration or oral sex. Secondly, condoms are extremely effective at preventing the transmission of Chlamydia from one sexual partner to another.

Condoms and dams are made of latex. Condoms go on a man's penis before intercourse or oral sex and dams are used over a woman's genitals during oral sex. They provide a barrier between a man's urethra and his partner's cervix (if female) or rectum (if male or female) or between the mouth and genitals during oral sex. This stops the Chlamydia bacteria from being able to travel from one partner to another.

You've probably heard a lot about condoms already but just in case you haven't, here are a few tips about how to use a condom.

- Check the expiry date on the packet first (the latex in condoms wears out)
- Don't use a condom that has been left for many hours in direct sunlight or extreme heat (this weakens the latex and makes the condom more likely to break)
- When putting a condom on, gently squeeze the tip of the condom so that it doesn't fill with air. When a man ejaculates, the semen goes into this part of the condom and if it's full of air beforehand it is more likely to break during ejaculation.
- Wait until the penis is fully erect before putting the condom on
- Use plenty of water-based lubricant – you can put this all over the condom before penetration
- Don't leave the penis inside your partner until it has become completely soft again – it should be withdrawn while the penis is still quite hard to prevent leakage of semen from around the condom
- Hold onto the bottom of the condom when removing it to avoid spillage
- Discard the used condom in a rubbish bin – don't flush them down the toilet!
- Use a condom only once and then discard it
- Practise using condoms before having sex if you're not sure how to use them!

Condoms can be bought by anyone and are available in supermarkets, pharmacies, petrol stations and lots of other places. There are no age restrictions on who can buy condoms. Condoms can be used on penises, and also on vibrators and other sex toys, to prevent the spread of infections.

Condoms not only prevent the spread of Chlamydia, they also prevent the spread of most other STIs as well as pregnancy!

Another way to prevent the spread of Chlamydia is for sexually active young people to be tested for Chlamydia regularly. Sexual health experts recommend that sexually active young people have a Chlamydia test about once a year even if they have no symptoms.