



Chlamydia FAQs

What is chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted bacterial infection.

How is chlamydia affecting the NWT?

- Chlamydia is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI) in the NWT.
- This bacterial infection has been on the rise in Canada for the last two decades. The NWT has had some of the highest rates of chlamydia in the country, about 6 times the national average (HSS 2016)
- Not all regions or communities are affected the same.
- One of the reasons why rates are so high is that many people are engaging in unsafe sexual activities. A delay or absence of screening is also a factor in high rates.
- NWT rates of infection are highest among young adults and rates are higher in females than males. Highest rates are observed in men aged 20 to 29 years of age and women aged 15 to 25 year of age.
- **Chlamydia can be passed on through vaginal or anal sex, and less commonly, oral sex. It can also be passed from mother to child during childbirth.**
- Those who engage in unprotected oral or anal sex are still at risk and need to be tested even if they do not engage in penile-vaginal intercourse
- You may have chlamydia and not even know you're infected, without any symptoms of infection. However, even if you do not have symptoms you can still spread chlamydia infection to others.
- If left untreated, chlamydia can seriously affect your life. It can lead to sterility or ectopic pregnancy.
- Getting tested is the only way to know for sure if you have chlamydia.
- Chlamydia testing in the NWT is free and confidential.

- Chlamydia commonly occurs with gonorrhoea and in the NWT both are routinely tested for at the same time. Testing includes a urine test, throat and/or rectal swabs.
- You can contact your local Public Health Office in larger communities or your Community Health Centre to get tested.

What can I do to protect myself?

- If you are sexually active, practice safer sex by wearing a condom or using a dental dam.
- Get routinely tested for STIs if you are sexually active.
- If you are treated with antibiotics for a chlamydia infection follow all treatment instructions carefully and be sure to have a follow-up visit with your nurse or doctor to make sure all signs of the infection are gone.
- Tell your partner if you have become infected with chlamydia so they can get tested and treated.
- Talk about this important health issue with partners, family and friends.

What is the Government of the Northwest Territories doing?

Actions include the following:

- Providing timely access to clinical advice, testing and treatment as well as targeted education and awareness work especially related to safe sex practices
- Identifying and addressing underlying issues, such as poor mental health, alcohol and drug use, sexual violence and bullying as these are significant factors contributing to sexual health issues.
- Working with communities to improve clinical case management and prevention/promotion activities for high-risk groups such as young adults.
- Working with Education, Culture and Employment to update the NWT's school health curriculum.