

Repeat Chlamydia Infections – A Burden to Women’s Health



“These findings confirm that we must do a better job of preventing reinfections in women. Behavioral interventions for women to reduce the number of sex partners and increase condom use is important. We need to do a better job with male partners: screenings, faster treatment, and partner notification strategies.”

Linda Niccolai, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Yale School of Public Health

CARE Tips to prevent chlamydia:

- Use latex condoms to prevent chlamydia and other STIs.
- Any woman age 25 or younger should be tested for chlamydia every year.
- If you test positive for chlamydia, get treatment at your local health center. And have all sexual partners tested and treated too.

Local Health Centers:

Fair Haven Community Health Center
203.777.7411

Hill Health Center
203.503.3000

Planned Parenthood
203.503.0450

New Haven STD Treatment Clinic
203.946.8181

Publication: Linda Niccolai, Abby Hochberg; Kathleen Ethier; Jessica Lewis; Jeannette Ickovics. Burden of Recurrent Chlamydia trachomatis Infections in Young Women. Further Uncovering the “Hidden Epidemic” Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine 2007;161:246-251.



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Women 14 to 24 years old have the highest rates of chlamydia, one of the most common sexually transmitted infections (STI). Many women who get chlamydia once, often get it again—that is, they have a “recurring infection.”

Yale researchers looked at how often young women were having recurring infections. They studied 411 teens at 10 community based clinics around Connecticut, including New Haven. They found that:

- Over half of the participants had chlamydia
- Of all chlamydia cases, over half were recurring infections
- The average time for a recurring infection was 5 months

This shows that the rate of recurring infections among young women is higher than thought. This rate of infection is a public health concern because of chlamydia’s connection to:

- the inability to have children
- constant pelvic pain
- pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)
- increased risk for HIV

Bottom Line

Efforts to prevent recurring chlamydia infections in young women must be improved. Counseling should be provided at the time of a chlamydia diagnosis to prevent recurring infections. Men should be tested to prevent them from infecting their partners.

Definitions

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted infection that infects the urinary and reproductive organs. Symptoms may include painful urination, lower abdominal pain, vaginal discharge and pain during sex. However, most women do not have any symptoms.

Pelvic inflammatory disease is an infection of the female reproductive organs (the uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries).

CARE: Community Alliance for Research and Engagement is committed to improving health in New Haven. One goal is to share important research findings in our community so that they are easily accessible to all—to educate, inform, and spur action. Yale investigators thank the women, men and children of New Haven who participated in research projects designed to improve health. We value your participation and recognize that you are central to these efforts. We hope that you can use this information to prevent disease and promote good health in your family and in our community.