



Philadelphia Department of Public Health  
**Division of Disease Control**

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## **Health Notification**

### **Importance of Chlamydia Screening in Young Women July 9, 2014**

Chlamydia is the most frequently reported sexually transmitted infection in Philadelphia as well as the United States. Chlamydia is known as a “silent” disease because so many who have the infection are asymptomatic (70-90% of infected females and up to 30% of infected males). In Philadelphia during 2013 there were over 10,000 cases of chlamydia reported among adolescents 15-24 years of age. Given that STDs are associated with life-long poor health outcomes and health care costs of more than \$16 billion per year, it is critical that providers and health plans work to reduce the disproportionate impact of STDs on youth.

The current recommendation is to screen all sexually active females 24 years of age and younger for chlamydia annually. Because there is a very high rate of sexual activity among Philadelphia adolescents and assessing sexual activity in this age group may not be reliable, it is preferable to screen all females 15-24 years old.

Adolescents and young adults have fewer preventive care visits than other age groups, therefore screening for chlamydia at any medical encounter is recommended as the patient may not present for preventive care. The availability of urine based testing for chlamydia obviates the need for pelvic exam in patients who do not have complaints warranting a pelvic exam.

Normalize chlamydia screening in your office:

- Screen all sexually active women 15-24 years of age for chlamydia at least annually
- Ensure that patients and staff know that chlamydia screening is part of routine care
- Use all medical visits, not just well (preventive care) visits, to screen patients
- Obtain urine based testing for screening, even if a pelvic exam is not being performed
- Establish a system to remind patients to come in to the office for preventive care

For patients who test positive for chlamydia:

- Treat with azithromycin 1 gram orally or doxycycline 100 mg bid for 7 days
- Test for other STDs including gonorrhea, syphilis and HIV
- Ensure partner treatment (partners may be referred to Health Department STD clinics at Health Center #1 and Health Center # 5 for evaluation and treatment).
  - Call 215-685-6575 to refer to Health Center #1 located at 1400 Lombard Street
  - Call 215-685-2949 to refer to Health Center #5 located at 1900 North 20<sup>th</sup> Street

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

#### **Chlamydia in Philadelphia**

- Over 10,000 cases reported among adolescents 15-24 years of age in 2013

#### **Chlamydia Screening**

- Screen all sexually active women 15-24 years of age
- Screen patients at all medical visits
- Use urine based testing unless a pelvic exam is needed

#### **Positive Chlamydia Test**

- Treat with azithromycin 1 gram orally or doxycycline 100 mg bid for 7 days
- Test for other STDs
- Ensure partner treatment
  - Refer to STD clinic at Health Center 1 or 5

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