THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT GONORRHEA AND CHLAMYDIA

What are gonorrhea and chlamydia?
- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- Gonorrhea is caused by the bacterium Neisseria gonorrhoeae
- Chlamydia is caused by the bacterium Chlamydia trachomatis
- The bacteria grow and multiply in warm, moist areas, including the mouth, throat, eyes, anus, urethra (tube carrying urine outside the body); and the cervix, uterus, and fallopian tubes in women.
- May cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) in women, which increases the risk for ectopic pregnancy (when fertilized egg grows outside the uterus) and infertility.
- May cause epididymitis in men (painful inflammation of the epididymis, the coiled tube behind the testicle that stores and carries sperm), which can cause infertility.

What are the symptoms?
- Symptoms of gonorrhea and chlamydia are often mild and even absent.
- Burning during urination.
- Unusual or increased discharge from the vagina or penis.
- Painful or swollen testicles.
- Vaginal bleeding between periods.
- Rectal infection, which is characterized by discharge, anal itching, soreness, bleeding, or painful bowel movements.
- Throat infection characterized by a sore throat.

How are they treated?
- When taken as directed, appropriately prescribed antibiotics can cure the infection.
- If symptoms persist after treatment, return to a doctor for reevaluation.
- All sex partners should be evaluated, tested, and treated.
- Get retested 3 months after treatment of an initial infection to check for recurrence.
- Antibiotics will not repair any permanent damage caused by the disease, including infertility.

How can they be prevented?
- The surest way is to abstain from sexual intercourse.
- Be in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who was tested and is uninfected.
- Use latex condoms consistently and correctly.
- See a doctor immediately if any genital symptoms develop.
- If diagnosed and treated, notify all recent sex partners so they can seek treatment.
- Abstain from sexual intercourse for as long your doctor advises to prevent spreading the infection.
- Regular testing for gonorrhea and chlamydia may be advised by your doctor.

For More Information
- www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorials/sexuallytransmitteddiseases/index.htm (English)
- www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/tutorials/sexuallytransmitteddiseasesspanish.htm/index.htm (Spanish)
- Information on sexually transmitted diseases from the National Institutes of Health MedlinePlus, including an interactive tutorial in English and Spanish.
- Chart listing genital problems in men and women and providing guidance about when to see a doctor from the American Academy of Family Physicians.
- www.mayoclinic.com/health/condoms/MY00654/METHOD=print
- Information about condoms and their proper use from the Mayo Clinic.