

# EPT Information for Patients

## Why Am I Getting Extra Medicine?

You have been diagnosed with **chlamydia** (kluh-MI-dee-uh) and/or **gonorrhea** (gon-uh-REE-uh). It is a sexually transmitted infection (STI). That means it is transmitted or spread through oral, vaginal, or anal sex with an infected person.

You have been given medicine to treat (cure) your infection. You were also given medicine or a prescription to give to your sex partner(s). Bringing medicines to your partners this way is called **Expedited Partner Therapy** (or **EPT** for short).

Once your partners are treated, it is less likely that they will develop serious health problems, infect you again, or pass the infection on to others.

## What Do I Need To Know About Chlamydia/Gonorrhea?

Most people with chlamydia and/or gonorrhea don't have any symptoms (signs of infection). You can be infected and not know it. Or you may have discharge (drip) from the penis, vagina, and/or anus; pain or a burning feeling when you urinate (pee); or a sore throat.

If you don't get treated, you may develop serious, even life-long, health problems. If you are female and don't get treated, you may not be able to get pregnant later.

Pregnant women can pass the infection to their babies during pregnancy. This can cause very serious health problems for the baby.

## How Do I Tell My Partner(s)?

Telling your partners that you have an STI can be hard, but it is the right thing to do. The best way to tell your partners is by being open and honest.

Your partners may feel surprised, upset, angry, or scared. These feelings are normal. By offering them the EPT medicine or prescription, you are showing that you care enough to help.

## What Should I Do Next?

- Talk to all your recent sex partner(s). Explain that you have been diagnosed with a STI and got medicine to treat it. They need medicine too.
- Give them the medicines or prescriptions and the printed information from your health care provider.
- Encourage your partners to visit a health care provider. Even if they take the EPT medicine, they should still get tested for other STIs.
- Visit a health care provider yourself in 3 months to get tested for STIs again.

### Sample Script for Talking to your Partner:

*"These medicines (or prescription) are to cure an STI called chlamydia and/or gonorrhea.*

*I took the medicines, and you should, too, since you also might have the infection.*

*You should read the information that came with the medicines and go to a health care provider to get checked for other STIs."*

### Other Questions?

**What medicine(s) was I given?** - If you were diagnosed with **chlamydia**, you have likely been given **doxycycline** (daak-suh-sai-kleen) to cure your infection. If you are pregnant, you may have been given **azithromycin** (uh-zith-ro-MY-sin) instead. You were also given the same medicine or a prescription for your sex partner(s).

If you were diagnosed with **gonorrhea**, you have been given an injection (shot) of **ceftriaxone** (sef-tri-ak-son) to cure your infection. You were also given **cefixime** (su-FIX-eem), or a prescription for it, to give to your partner(s).

**Why did I get a shot but my partner gets pills?** - For gonorrhea, getting a shot of ceftriaxone is best. But cefixime pills are a good option for your partner if you don't think that he/she will see a provider soon.

**What if my partner blames me?** - People worry about their partners being angry, but you may not be the one who infected them. Explain that people infected with chlamydia and/or gonorrhea usually don't have symptoms. A person can have it for a long time and not know it. The most important thing is to tell your partners about the infection. Take steps so that you and your sex partners get healthy and avoid future STIs.

**My sex partner has no symptoms. Should they still take the medicines?** - Yes. People with STIs may not have any symptoms. Taking the medicines will cure the infection.

**What if my sex partner is pregnant or thinks she may be pregnant?** - If your sex partner is pregnant or thinks she may be pregnant, it is okay for her to take **cefixime** and **azithromycin**. The medicines used to treat chlamydia and gonorrhea will not hurt the baby. However, she should not take **doxycycline**, and she should see a health care provider as soon as possible to be tested for other STIs, which she can pass on to her baby during pregnancy.

**What should I do after giving my partners these medicines?** -

The medicine takes about 7 days to work. Do not have sex (vaginal, oral, or anal) for 7-10 days after both you and your partners have been treated. You can get chlamydia or gonorrhea again if you have sex before the medicine cures your partners. If you do have sex, use a latex condom or dental dam (for oral sex) so you don't get infected again.

**What if my partner won't take the medicine?** - If your sex partner won't take the medicine, he or she should see a health care provider as soon as possible to get tested for STIs. Even if you have been treated, you can get infected again if your partner is not also treated.

### EPT may not be a good choice for your partner if...

- You think your partner could become violent.
- You have also been diagnosed with an STI other than chlamydia and/or gonorrhea.
- Your partner is a man who has sex with other men. He should visit a health care provider as soon as possible to get tested for other STIs such as syphilis and HIV.

### Avoid STIs in the Future

The only way to completely avoid STIs, including HIV, is to not have sex.

If you do have sex, do it safely. Use a latex condom every time and for every kind of sex—anal and vaginal, and a condom or dental dam for oral sex.

You can lower your chances of getting STIs, including HIV, by limiting the number of people you have sex with. The more sex partners you have, the higher your risk of getting an STI.