

# EPT Information for Partners

## Why Am I Getting Medicine or a Prescription?

Your sex partner has been diagnosed with:

- chlamydia** (kluh-MI-dee-uh) *and/or*  **gonorrhea** (gon-uh-REE-uh).

You may have chlamydia or gonorrhea too. Chlamydia and gonorrhea are sexually transmitted infections (STIs). That means they are transmitted or spread through oral, vaginal, or anal sex with an infected person.

These infections are easy to treat (cure) by taking medicine. Chlamydia is treated with a medicine called **doxycycline** (daak-suh-sai-kleen). Sometimes chlamydia is treated with a different medicine called **azithromycin** (uh-zith-ro-MY-sin) instead. Gonorrhea is treated with a medication called cefixime (su-FIX-eem). These medicines are very safe.

Your sex partner was treated. You need to be treated, too. That's why a health care provider gave your partner medicine or a prescription to give to you. Getting treated this way, without seeing a health care provider, is called **Expedited Partner Therapy** or **EPT**.

## 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. That means that you can pass it on to others without knowing it.

If you do have symptoms, 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.

## Why Should I Take My Medicine?

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. This can cause very serious health problems for babies.

The good news is, once you are treated, you won't infect your partner(s) or pass the infection on to others.

## Should I see a Health Care Provider?

- Seeing a health care provider is best.
- If you cannot see a health care provider in the next few days, take the EPT medications or fill the prescriptions your partner has given to you.
- Even if you take both of the medicines, see a health care provider as soon as possible.
- That way, you can be tested for chlamydia, gonorrhea, and other STIs too. You may have more than one STI at the same time. The doxycycline and cefixime will not cure most other STIs.

## Reasons Not to Take the Medicine

Azithromycin and cefixime, and doxycycline are safe medicines.

But do not take it if you:

- Are female and have lower belly pain, pain during sex, vomiting or fever. Also, doxycycline should not be taken if you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant.
- Are male and have pain or swelling in the testicles (balls) or fever.
- Have had a rash, breathing problems or allergic reaction to doxycycline, azithromycin, cefixime, or other medicine.
- Have a serious long-term illness, such as kidney, heart, or liver disease.
- Take another prescription medicine, including medicine for diabetes.

If any of these are true for you, or if you are not sure, **see a health care provider as soon as possible!**

### How to Take the Medicine:

- Take the medicine all at once, and with food to help prevent upset stomach.
- If you throw up within one hour after taking your medicine, you need to get more medicine. In this case, it's best to see a health care provider as soon as possible.
- After taking your medicine, **wait 7-10 days before having sex**. If you do have sex, use a condom or dental dam (for oral sex) so you don't get infected again.
- Do not take antacids, such as Tums, Roloids, or Maalox, for 1 hour before or 2 hours after taking your medicine.
- Do not share or give your medicine to anyone else

### Other Questions?

#### Why did I get pills but my partner got a shot?

For gonorrhea infections, seeing a health care provider and getting an injection (shot) of ceftriaxone is best. But cefixime pills are a good option for you if you can't see a health care provider soon.

#### If you are pregnant

Azithromycin and cefixime are both safe to take during pregnancy. But, even if you take the medicine, you should see a health care provider right away. That way you can make sure you get the best care for you and your baby. ***Doxycycline should not be taken if you are pregnant*** or think that you may be pregnant.

#### If you are a man who has sex with men

Men whose sex partners include other men need to be tested for other STIs too. You may have other STIs such as syphilis or HIV and not know it. It is very important that you see a health care provider and get tested.

#### Side effects

Most people have no side effects (feel sick) from azithromycin, cefixime, or doxycycline. Some people may get: diarrhea; slight upset stomach; dizziness; or vaginal yeast infection. These side effects are usually not serious.

#### Allergic reactions

If you have signs of an allergic reaction, **call 911** or go to the **Emergency Room** immediately. These signs include: trouble breathing, throat tightness, swelling of your lips or tongue, or hives (very itchy skin bumps or welts).

The Virginia Department of Health wants to learn about any serious problems you may have had with medicine. If you think you had an allergic reaction, contact 1-800-533-4148 or email [hiv-stdhotline@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:hiv-stdhotline@vdh.virginia.gov).

### Avoid STIs in the Future

The only way to completely avoid STIs, including HIV, is not to 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 or 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

**To find low-cost or free STI/HIV testing sites near you, go to [gettested.cdc.gov](https://gettested.cdc.gov), call your local health department, or talk to a trained hotline counselor: 1-800-533-4148 OR [hiv-stdhotline@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:hiv-stdhotline@vdh.virginia.gov)**