



## EXPEDITED PARTNER THERAPY (EPT) FOR THE TREATMENT OF CHLAMYDIA AND GONORRHEA

### GUIDE FOR PATIENT

#### What are chlamydia and gonorrhea?

Chlamydia and gonorrhea are sexually transmitted infections (STIs) caused by bacteria. They can affect the reproductive and genital tracts (sex organs), throat, and rectum. A person infected with these diseases can have severe, mild or no symptoms (signs/clues). Signs of both chlamydia and gonorrhea can include burning or pain when urinating (peeing), penile or vaginal discharge, and pain or swelling in the testicles. Infection of the rectum can also cause rectal pain, bleeding, or discharge. Infection of the throat can cause a sore throat. Chlamydia and gonorrhea infection sometimes causes infection of the reproductive organs inside the body (uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries), called Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), infertility (unable to get pregnant), and ectopic pregnancy (a pregnancy that is outside of the uterus). Gonorrhea can also spread to the blood and joints, which can be deadly. Both chlamydia and gonorrhea can be passed to sex partners without having signs/clues. Having an untreated sex partner is a big factor for getting the infection again and other problems linked to these infections. Treating the sex partners of a person who has chlamydia and/or gonorrhea is a great way to stop the spread of these STIs.

#### Why am I getting extra antibiotics (medicine) or an extra prescription for antibiotics?

You are being treated for chlamydia and/or gonorrhea. Your sex partner(s) need to be treated with antibiotics so they don't develop major health problems, pass the infection to you (again), or pass it on to others. You are getting extra medicine or prescription for medicine to give to your sex partner(s) in order to treat them. This is Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT).

#### What is Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) and is it safe?

Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) is an easier, faster, and private way for your sex partners to be treated for chlamydia and/or gonorrhea without seeing a healthcare provider. State law allows healthcare providers to give extra antibiotics (medicine), or an extra prescription, for you to give to your sex partner(s) so they can be treated as soon as possible. Your healthcare provider will give you a Guide for Patients, and a Guide for Partners that you can give to your sex partner(s). You need to read over this sheet and all the facts about the medicine that come from the pharmacy before taking any of the medicine. If you have questions about the medicine, you can ask the pharmacist or healthcare provider.

#### How do I tell my partner(s)? What do I do if things go badly?

1. Think about everyone you had sex with in the past 60 days. If you have not had sex in the last 60 days, think about your most recent sex partner before then. Tell them that you have been tested and treated for an STI called chlamydia and/or gonorrhea and they may have this STI, even if they do not have any signs/clues of the infection.
2. Give your sex partner(s) the antibiotics (medicine) or the prescription for antibiotics as well as the sheet "Guide for Sex Partners" that your healthcare provider gave you.
3. Encourage your sex partner(s) to read the Guide for Partners before taking the medicine. You should also urge all your sex partner(s) to see a healthcare provider to be tested for other STIs, even if they take the medicine.

Telling sex partners that you have an STI can be difficult, but it is the right thing to do and a major way to prevent them from having health problems from the infection, keeping yourself from getting it again, and stopping the spread of the infection to others. The best way to tell your sex partner(s) is by being open and honest. You could say, "These antibiotics treat an STI called gonorrhea (and/or chlamydia), and you should take them because I have this and you may too. You should read the facts that come with the medicine and go see a healthcare provider to get tested for other STIs". You or your partners may feel embarrassed, ashamed, guilty, angry or scared; these feelings are normal. Yet, by giving them the medicine or prescription, you are showing you care enough to help.



### **If my sex partner(s) blame me, what do I do?**

People worry about their sex partner(s) being angry, but you may not be the one who gave them chlamydia and/or gonorrhea. These infections often do not have any signs/clues, so a person can have it for a long time and not know it. The main thing is to tell your partner(s) about the infection, urge them to be tested, and take steps to avoid future STIs, such as using condoms.

### **What if my sex partner(s) becomes violent, when I tell him/her/them I have an STI, what do I do?**

If you think a sex partner could become violent, EPT may not be the best path. Ask your healthcare provider for help telling your sex partner(s); they can work with the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services to reach out to sex partner(s) to get them tested and linked to care, without sharing your name. If a sex partner ever threatens you or becomes violent, you should quickly call 911.

### **My sex partner(s) have questions about EPT. What do I do?**

Your sex partner(s) can call the phone number on the prescription paper/bottle/box, read the Guide for Partners fact sheet, talk to the pharmacist when getting the prescription, or call the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services' Bureau of Infectious Disease Control at (603) 271-4496. They should also talk with their healthcare provider about testing for other STIs.

### **My sex partner(s) are not sick. Should they still take the antibiotics (medicine)?**

Yes. People with a chlamydia and/or gonorrhea infection may not feel sick or experience any signs/clues. Taking the antibiotics (medicine) should cure their infection.

### **What should my sex partner(s) expect when they go to the pharmacy to pick up the antibiotics?**

If your healthcare provider writes a prescription for antibiotics (medicine) for your sex partner(s), you will give that prescription to your sex partner(s). Sex partners will need their own prescription, and can fill the prescription at any pharmacy (Rite Aid, CVS, Walgreens, Wal-Mart and others). On the prescription, your healthcare provider will list the medicine name, dose, and directions on how to take the medicine. The prescription **MUST HAVE** your sex partner's name, date of birth, and address. If you do not share this information with your healthcare provider, it will be blank and your sex partner(s) **MUST** add this before a pharmacist can fill the prescription. If your sex partner(s) has/have questions about the medicine, they need to talk with the pharmacist or their healthcare provider.

### **What should I do after taking the antibiotics (medicine)?**

Take the medicine for 7 days to fully treat the infection. You should not have sex (vaginal, oral, or anal) until 7 days after you have finished all of your medicine. You can get chlamydia and/or gonorrhea again, if you have sex before the medicine(s) cure you and your sex partner(s). If you were not tested for other STIs, including HIV and syphilis, see a healthcare provider and get tested. Even if you take the medicine, it is possible to have more than one STI at a time.

### **What if my sex partner will not take the antibiotics (medicine)?**

If a sex partner will not take the antibiotics, they need to see a healthcare provider to be tested as soon as possible for chlamydia, gonorrhea and other STIs. Share with your sex partner(s), the facts of being not being tested and treated, and that it can cause major health problems. You should not have sex (vaginal, oral, or anal) until 7 days after they have finished all their medication, because you could get chlamydia and/or gonorrhea again.

### **How do I keep from getting sexually transmitted infections (STIs)?**

The only way to keep from getting any STIs is to not have sex (vaginal, oral or anal). If you choose to have sex, use a condom, every time and for every kind of sex (vaginal, oral or anal). You can also lower your chances of getting STIs by having less sex partners; such as, have 2 sex partners, not 3 sex partners. For more facts, talk to your healthcare provider. You can also call the New Hampshire Department of health and Human Services' Bureau of Infectious Disease Control at (603) 271-4496.

