

Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT)

A Guide for Sex Partners

Chlamydia & Azithromycin

Why am I getting extra medicine or a prescription?

One of your sex partners has been diagnosed with and treated for chlamydia, a disease that is transmitted by having sex. You also need to be treated so you don't develop chlamydia or related serious health problems, re-infect your sex partner, or pass it on to others.

What is chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) spread through oral, anal and vaginal sex. People who have chlamydia, especially women, usually have no symptoms. If there are symptoms, they can include pain or burning during urination, and pus or discharge from the penis, vagina or anus. Even without symptoms, chlamydia can be passed on to sex partners.

Why should I take this medicine?

If not treated, chlamydia infections can lead to serious health problems like infertility (not being able to have children) and pelvic inflammatory disease. This disease can be very painful, and in women, can affect the uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries. It can also lead to an unusual pregnancy in the fallopian tubes (ectopic pregnancy).

What is Expedited Partner Therapy?

A health care provider has given your sex partner medicine or a prescription to give to you so that you can be treated for chlamydia. This is called Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) and is a convenient, fast and private way for you to be treated.

Is Expedited Partner Therapy legal and is it safe?

Yes, Maine State law allows health care providers to provide medicine or a prescription to patients diagnosed with chlamydia so they can give it to their partners. The medicine, called azithromycin, is safe and almost 100% effective when used as directed.

Will this medicine cure all STDs?

NO. This medicine will ONLY cure chlamydia. If you think that you may have or have been exposed to other STDs, you should visit a health care provider and discuss your concerns.

What is this medicine?

The medicine you are getting is an antibiotic; it will cure your chlamydia infection but will not treat other STDs you may have.

DO NOT TAKE this medicine if any of the following are true:

- You have lower stomach pain, cramps, pain during sex, are throwing up, have pain in the testicles (balls) or a fever.
- You are allergic or have ever had a bad reaction, rash, or allergy to any antibiotics, including azithromycin (Zithromax), erythromycin or clarithromycin (Biaxin).
- You have any serious, long-term health problems like kidney, heart or liver disease; seizures; or you are taking blood thinners.

If **any** of the above is true and you cannot take the medicine, you should see a health care provider as soon as possible so they can give you another medicine that cures chlamydia.

How should I take the medicine?

- Take all of this medicine right away (by mouth). Do not share the medicine; you need to take all of it for it to work.
- Take it on an empty stomach (at least 1 hour before eating or 2 hours after eating).
- If you throw up within an hour of taking the medicine, it will not work and you will have to get more. Call the telephone number on the prescription or call (207) 287-3747.

What should I do next?

- Do not have sex (vaginal, oral or anal) for at least 7 days after you and your sex partners have been treated. The medicine takes 7 days to work. You can get chlamydia again if you have sex before the medicine cures you and your partner.
- See a doctor and get checked for other STDs (including HIV). Even if you take the medicine, it is important to get tested for other STDs because you can have more than one STD at a time. This medicine only cures chlamydia.

Other Questions You May Have

What if I don't think I have chlamydia?

You can have chlamydia even if you feel fine. Because you had sex with someone who has chlamydia, you might also have it, and you should be treated. Many STDs don't cause symptoms so it is good to see a health care provider to find out if you have illness.

How do I know this medicine is real; what if I have questions?

You can call (207) 287-3747 or the phone number on the prescription, or visit <http://mainepublichealth.gov/std> for answers to your questions.

What if I am pregnant or think I may be pregnant?

This medicine is widely used and well tolerated among pregnant women. After you take the medicine, see a health care provider as soon as possible. You should be tested for other STDs that can be passed on from a mother to her baby during pregnancy and delivery. Tell the provider you were treated because your sex partner had chlamydia.

What can I expect when I go to the pharmacy to pick up the medicine?

If your sex partner gave you a prescription for medicine, the pharmacist may ask for your name, address, date of birth and form of payment (insurance, co-payment, self-pay) when the prescription is dropped off or picked up at the pharmacy.

Does azithromycin cause side effects?

Not always but if there are side-effects, they may include one or more of the following: diarrhea, nausea, stomach ache, headache and throwing up. These are common and not dangerous. But if you throw up within an hour of taking the medicine, you need to visit a clinic or a doctor to get more medicine because the medicine did not have time to work. Contact the number on the prescription or call (207) 287-3747.

What kind of side effects can be dangerous?

It is rare, but some people do experience serious allergic reactions. These reactions can cause trouble breathing, chest tightness, closing of the throat, swelling of the lips or tongue and hives (itchy bumps on the skin). If you have any of these problems after taking this medicine, immediately call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

What if I don't take the medicine?

If you decide not to take the medicine, you should see a health care provider to get tested as soon as possible. Chlamydia that is not treated can lead to serious health problems and can be spread to other sex partners.

For more information please call (207) 287-3747 or visit us at <http://mainepublichealth.gov/std>

How do I Avoid Sexually Transmitted Diseases?

- The only way to completely avoid STDs, 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 – oral, anal and vaginal.
- You can reduce your chances of getting chlamydia and other STDs, 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 STD.

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