

NEWS
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Washington, D.C. - The American College of Preventive Medicine (ACPM) recommended today that all sexually active women 25 years of age or younger as well as sexually active women with other risk factors be screened annually for chlamydia. Other risk factors include having a new male sex partner or two or more partners during the preceding year, inconsistent use of barrier contraception, history of a prior sexually transmitted disease, African-American race, and cervical ectopy.

According to Dr. Katerina Hollblad-Fadiman, the lead author of ACPM's recommendation, "While chlamydia has become the nation's most common bacterial sexually transmitted disease, it can in fact be controlled by aggressive public health efforts. Not only can effective screening programs result in the diagnosis and treatment of chlamydia in currently infected persons, but they can greatly reduce transmission of the disease to unsuspecting sexual partners."

Chlamydia affects more than 4 million Americans each year. Seventy percent of all reported cases occur in women under the age of 25. Widespread screening is necessary since up to 70% of infected women and 75% of infected men are asymptomatic. Once detected, treatment is effective and simple.

Cervicitis is the most common reported manifestation of chlamydial infection in women. Pelvic inflammatory disease occurs in up to 30% of untreated women leading to possible ectopic pregnancy and/or tubal infertility. Chlamydial infection also increases the likelihood of both transmitting and acquiring HIV infection.

According to Dr. Robert Harmon, President of ACPM, "Sexually transmitted diseases are truly the nation's hidden epidemic. ACPM uses in-depth evidence reviews to determine the most effective ways to prevent STDs and many other preventable conditions."

ACPM's practice policy statement on screening for *Chlamydia trachomatis* appears in the April 2003 issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. The statement can be viewed at www.acpm.org.

The American College of Preventive Medicine is the national professional society for physicians committed to disease prevention and health promotion. ACPM's 2,000 members are engaged in preventive medicine practice, teaching and research. ACPM advocates for the specialty of preventive medicine and for national policies that promote health and prevent disease. ACPM maintains an active presence on Capitol Hill and among the many federal agencies and non-governmental organizations that shape national health policy.

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