

Contact tracing (also called partner notification)

Contact tracing involves finding and informing the contacts of a person with an infection so they can get information, testing and treatment. A contact is anyone with whom a patient with an STI has had unsafe sex. In the case of chlamydia this is generally unprotected vaginal or anal sex, and sometimes oral sex.

Contact tracing is important because it:

- helps stop patients who have been treated from getting the infection back again from their partner(s)
- helps stop the spread of infection in the community – most people with chlamydia don't know they have it and so can unknowingly spread it to others
- reduces the risk of complications in someone who might not otherwise know they had chlamydia.

Who is responsible for contact tracing?

General practitioners, nurses and other clinical staff treating patients with STIs; disease control staff in population health units; and patients all have responsibilities for contact tracing.

How is contact tracing done?

1. If you have diagnosed a patient with chlamydia, discuss the importance of notifying partners. Ask them to name their sexual contacts from the past three months. If there have not been any contacts in this period, go back to their most recent contact.
2. Make it as easy as possible for your patient to inform their contacts. A sample partner notification letter to give contacts is provided at www.couldihaveit.com/professionals.asp then click on 'Partner notification letter'. Patients may prefer to phone or text message, and/or direct their contacts to www.couldihaveit.com/youcouldhaveit.asp
3. Check with your patient whether there are any contacts whom they would like you or another health professional to inform. Obtain all relevant contact details (full name, age, address, phone number). If possible, you or the practice nurse should notify these contacts, particularly in the Perth metropolitan area. Refer any remaining contacts to the appropriate Population Health Unit (see below). Contact tracing is voluntary and confidential (health professionals will not disclose either the patient's name or any identifying information to the contact). *(Please note: There is currently very little capacity for contact tracing for chlamydia in Population Health in the metropolitan area. Please only use this resource if you have particular concerns, e.g. pregnancy or high transmitter.)*
4. The patient or health professional should inform the contact that they could have the infection and that they need to see a doctor to get tested and treated as soon as possible.

For more information

Contact your local Population Health Unit.

South Metro (08) 9431 0200	North Metro (08) 9380 7758
Albany (08) 9842 7500	Geraldton (08) 9956 1985*
Broome (08) 9194 1630	Kalgoorlie-Boulder (08) 9080 8200*
Bunbury (08) 9781 2350	Northam (08) 9622 4320
Carnarvon (08) 9941 0560*	South Hedland (08) 9172 8333*

*These population health units provide clinical services.