

Chancroid - the basics

It is a curable sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by a bacterium (a kind of germ) called *Haemophilus ducreyi*.

Chancroid causes painful ulcers or sores in the genital area as well as swelling of glands in the groin.

Prompt treatment is required to prevent more serious problems:

- In both sexes large boils (abscesses) may form in the groin.

In men scarring of the foreskin may make it too tight to pull back or cause the frenulum (banjo) to snap.

How common is Chancroid?

Chancroid is very rare in the UK. It used to be common in some African and Asian countries but the number of cases there has fallen greatly in recent times.

How do you catch Chancroid?

Chancroid is passed on through:

- unprotected vaginal, oral or anal sex with someone who has chancroid

Chancroid cannot be caught by kissing, from swimming pools, by sharing towels, saunas or from toilet seats

What would I notice if I had Chancroid?

Women may not notice anything wrong but they can still pass the infection on to their partner. Chancroid starts as a raised, tender spot on the genital skin, which then breaks down to form one or more ulcers. The ulcers often bleed and men are more likely than women to find them painful.

Men will usually notice:

- an ulcer on the foreskin or the shaft of the penis
- less often the ulcer may be on the head of the penis
- swollen lymph glands in the groin

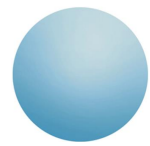
Some women may notice:

- an ulcer on the lips (labia) of the vulva
- swollen lymph glands in the groin

How do I get tested for Chancroid?

Swabs are taken from an ulcer by the doctor or nurse and sent to the laboratory for testing. Sometimes a piece of the ulcer is taken and sent for examination under a microscope. The results of these tests may take a few weeks to come back.

You will be told about how you will get your results before you leave the clinic.



How is Chancroid treated?

Chancroid is easily treated with antibiotics, usually tablets, sometimes by injection.

All treatment from sexual health clinics is given to you in the clinic, free of charge.

Important information about your treatment

The antibiotics are highly effective if you take them correctly.

What about my partner?

As chancroid is an STI it is important that your partner is tested for chancroid and other STIs too. Partners will usually be given treatment even if they have no ulcers.

If you wish, the clinic can contact your partners for you without mentioning your name.

When can I have sex again?

You must not have sex (this includes oral sex and sex with condoms) until both you and your partner have taken all your antibiotic treatment and your skin has completely healed.

What happens if my Chancroid is left untreated?

Complications of untreated chancroid are seen more often in men than in women. Tightening of the foreskin (phimosis) can occur. Large boils (abscesses) sometimes develop in the lymph glands.

Can you catch Chancroid again?

Yes you can.

To prevent this make sure that your partner is treated before you have sex with them.

Protect yourself with new partners by using a condom for all anal, oral and vaginal sex.

If you meet a new partner make sure that you both have a full sexual health screen before you have sex without condoms.

Chancroid in pregnancy

Chancroid can occur in pregnant women, but there is no evidence that it harms the baby.

More information: <http://www.bashh.org/guidelines>

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