

Expedited Partner Therapy for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea

Key Points:

- Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) is a fast, convenient, and private way for sexual partner(s) to get treatment for chlamydia and/or gonorrhea without first being examined by a health care provider.
- If your sexual partner(s) are unwilling or unable to get prompt treatment, you will receive a prescription and/or medications to give to them. If you know your sexual partners' preferred pharmacy, the prescription can be faxed.
- Your doctor can send medication to the pharmacy for you, or may recommend that you come back to the office for treatment.
- Men who have sex with men and anyone with a known allergy to azithromycin, cephalosporins or penicillin are not eligible for EPT.
- If you test positive for chlamydia and/or gonorrhea you must get treatment **as soon as possible**, in order to protect your own health and avoid spread to others.
 - Without treatment STIs can cause serious, long-lasting health problems.
 - Take your medication as directed in prescription information. After taking the medicine, do not have sex for 7 (seven) days.
- You and your sexual partner(s) should have a repeat test for chlamydia, gonorrhea and HIV in 3 months. If you are pregnant, you should have a repeat test 3-4 weeks after treatment.
- Additional resources for testing and treatment of STIs in Washtenaw County is attached to this material.

What is Expedited Partner Therapy?

Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) is a fast, convenient, and private way for sexual partners to get treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). In

order to ensure that both the patient and their sexual partners receive treatment to fight the infection, the patient will receive a prescription for themselves and one for their sexual partners.

Which STIs does EPT treat?

EPT is for treatment of chlamydia and/or gonorrhea. Chlamydia and gonorrhea are bacterial STIs you get from having sex with someone who is already infected. Many people with these STIs do not know they have it because they feel fine.

Why do I need treatment?

It is important to get treatment as soon as possible to protect your health, to avoid spreading the STI to others, and to prevent yourself from being re-infected.

Without treatment, these STIs can cause serious health problems including:

- Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)
- Ectopic pregnancy
- Infertility
- Increased risk of HIV

How do I get treatment for an STI?

Your doctor can send medication to the pharmacy for you, or may recommend that you come back to the office for treatment. If you have prescription coverage, you can provide your insurance information so the pharmacy can bill your health plan. If you do not have prescription coverage, you may be responsible for the cost of medications. You may also contact your local health department for treatment.

How do I get treatment for my sexual partners?

The best way for your partners to get treatment is to see their doctor or go to the local health department so they can discuss any concerns and check for

additional infections. If your partners cannot get to a doctor, they should choose EPT for treatment.

If you indicate to your provider that your sexual partners are unwilling or unable to get treatment at their doctor's office, you will be provided a prescription to give to them. Your sexual partners may fill the prescription at their preferred pharmacy. The name on the prescription for your sexual partners will be "Expedited Partner Therapy" with the birthdate "Jan. 1, (*current year*)".

If you know your sexual partners' preferred pharmacy you can choose to have the prescription faxed to their pharmacy. Make sure **you give your sexual partners the Order Number** on the prescription. They must provide this number to the pharmacist in order to pick up their prescription.

Who pays for my partners' prescriptions?

Your sexual partners will be responsible for the cost of their medications. If your partners have prescription coverage, they can provide their insurance information so the pharmacy can bill their health plan. If your partners do not have health insurance, they can pay for their medication or contact their local health department for treatment.

Attached is a list of additional resources for testing and treatment of STIs in Washtenaw County. For more information or if you live outside of Washtenaw County visit the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services STD (Sexually Transmitted Diseases) Program website at :
<http://www.michigan.gov/hivstd> or call 1-517-241-5900

What medications will I take?

Treatment for Chlamydia: You will take azithromycin 1 gram orally in a single dose. To reduce gastrointestinal symptoms (e.g., nausea or vomiting), we recommend that you take this medication with food. If you vomit within 1 hour of taking your medication, please call the clinic for another dose.

Treatment for Gonorrhea: You will be called back to the clinic to receive ceftriaxone 500 mg as an injection into the muscle (IM). You may need a higher dose of medication based on your weight. You may also need a different antibiotic if you have a known allergy to a specific group of antibiotics.

What medications will my partners take?

EPT for Chlamydia: Your sexual partners will take azithromycin 1 gram orally in a single dose. This medication should be taken with food to avoid gastrointestinal symptoms.

EPT for Gonorrhea: Partners will take cefixime 800 milligrams orally in a single dose.

Take your medication as directed. Some people may have a mild upset stomach. After taking the medicine, do not have sex for 7 (seven) days. Do not share your medication or give it to anyone else. It is important to tell everyone you have had sex with in the last 60 days that they need to see a doctor to be tested for STIs.

What happens after STI treatment?

It is important to make sure that your infection is gone after treatment. We recommend that you and your sexual partners have a repeat test for chlamydia, gonorrhea and HIV in 3 months. If you are pregnant, it is recommended you should have a repeat test at least 3-4 weeks after treatment.

Precautions

- Do **not** take these medications if you have had an allergic reaction to:
 - Azithromycin
 - Erythromycin
 - Clarithromycin
- Do not take ceftriaxone or cefixime if you have an allergy to cephalosporins or a life-threatening allergy to penicillin. If you do not know if you have an allergy, call your doctor or pharmacist before taking this medication.

- Contact your doctor before taking these medications if you have:
 - Kidney disease
 - Liver disease
 - Heart Disease
 - Colitis
 - Other stomach problems
- If you take other prescription medication(s), talk to your doctor and pharmacist before taking these medications.

Precautions for specific groups:

- **Women:** If you have lower belly pain, pain during sex, vomiting, or a fever, do **not** take this medication. You should see a doctor to be certain you do not have Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID). PID can be serious and may lead to infertility, pregnancy problems, or chronic pelvic pain.
- **Pregnant Women:** It is very important for you to see a doctor to get pregnancy services and pre-natal care. The antibiotics for EPT are safe for pregnant women, but you still need to see a doctor as soon as possible. It is also important to note that doxycycline is an alternative therapy for chlamydia treatment, but pregnant women should **not** take it.
- **Men:** If you have pain or swelling of your testicles, or have a fever, do **not** take this medication. See a doctor as soon as possible.
- **Men who have sex with men:** Michigan continues to experience high rates of syphilis and HIV in men who have sex with men. Many men with gonorrhea and/or chlamydia could also have syphilis and/or HIV and not know it. If you are a man who has sex with other men, it is very important that you see a healthcare provider and get tested for HIV and syphilis. Since there is no data that shows benefit of using EPT in men who have sex with men, this group is not eligible for EPT

How can I prevent STIs?

There are multiple ways to prevent STIs.

- Do not have sex. This is the only sure way to avoid getting or transmitting an STI.
- Use barrier methods, such as condoms, every time you have sex
- Limit your number of sexual partners.
- Get regular medical exams, including testing for STIs.

Where can I learn more information?

For more information about EPT or STIs, please contact your healthcare provider or local public health department. You can also contact the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services STD Program at (517) 241-0870 or www.michigan.gov/hivstd.

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Adapted from: Michigan Department of Community Health. [Expedited Partner Therapy: Information Sheet for Patients and Partners](#).

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