

***Chlamydia* - the facts**

- *Chlamydia* is the most common sexually transmitted bacterial infection.
- Seventy percent of women and 50% of men who have *Chlamydia* do not experience symptoms.
- Those who do experience symptoms may notice:
 - pain when urinating
 - an unusual or unpleasant discharge from the vagina or penis
 - abdominal pain
 - bleeding between periods or after sex in women.
- If left untreated, *Chlamydia* can cause long-term problems in women such as pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) and infertility. In men it is thought that *Chlamydia* could also cause fertility problems, as it is believed to affect sperm movement.
- *Chlamydia* can be successfully treated with antibiotics.
- If *Chlamydia* is detected, current and sometimes previous sexual partners would also need to be treated to prevent further complications and spread of infection.
- Condoms, when used properly and consistently, offer protection against *Chlamydia*.

Clem & Lydia promote new campaign to prevent *Chlamydia*

In a drive to reduce increasing rates of *Chlamydia* among young people, a ground breaking awareness campaign was launched on TV and the Internet from March 1st.

The campaign features colourful cartoon characters, 'Clem' and 'Lydia', promoting safer sex and highlighting the least known, but common, sexually transmitted infection. Internet users are signposted to the website www.lovelife.hea.org.uk to view the advert online. Almost a quarter of million 'Clem' and 'Lydia' postcards promoting the campaign and website are also being distributed to universities and bars throughout the UK.

HEA research has shown that less than half of 16-24 years olds have heard of *Chlamydia*, compared to more than 80% who have heard of herpes, hepatitis B and more than 90% who have heard of HIV.

The most recent *Chlamydia* figures show that between 1997 and 1998 there was a 17% increase among 16-19 year olds. More than 25 000 new cases of *Chlamydia* among 16-24 year olds were reported at genito-urinary medicine clinics in the UK in 1998.

A list of all the local NHS sexual health (GUM) clinics in the UK is available from the website at www.lovelife.hea.org.uk or by calling 0800 567 123 for free and confidential advice on all sexual infections.

A TV public information short film called 'Spots', also highlighting the risks of *Chlamydia*, will be marketed to all TV stations over the next year.

For further information please contact Katherine Evans at the HEA's press office on 0171 413 1951.