

# LYMPHOGRANULOMA VENEREUM

## WHAT IS LYMPHOGRANULOMA VENEREUM?

Lymphogranuloma Venereum (LGV) is an infection caused by certain strains of chlamydia (types L1-L3). This bacterium can infect the genitals or anus and may spread to involve the lymph nodes (glands) of the genital area.

## HOW IS IT TRANSMITTED?

It is transmitted by unprotected (no condom) vaginal and anal intercourse.

## WHO GETS LGV?

LGV is uncommon in Australia, and is mostly seen in tropical developing countries. Recently, there have been outbreaks of LGV among men who have sex with men in Western Europe. Cases can therefore occur in Australia in travellers or people who have had partners from overseas.

## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?

*When the anus is involved:*

This is the most common presentation in men and women who have anal sex. Infection of the anus with LGV can cause anal pain, discharge and trouble using your bowels. The medical term for this is 'proctitis'.

*When the genitals are involved:*

The first sign of infection is a pimple, blister or ulcer, which often goes unnoticed. In men it is usually on the penis. In women, it is in the vagina or on the cervix. The infection then spreads to the lymph nodes (glands) in the inguinal area—the skin crease between your pubic area and the upper thighs. These glands become inflamed and persistently swollen. People may feel generally unwell at this time.

## HOW LONG UNTIL SYMPTOMS DEVELOP?

This can vary widely, but the first symptoms may appear 3-30 days after infection.

## HOW DO YOU TEST FOR LGV?

Because LGV is not very common, specialised tests need to be done to confirm that LGV is the cause of your symptoms. Sometimes this will involve swabs from the anus or genitals as well as blood tests. Unfortunately, these complex tests can take several weeks to give a result. Tests to check for the presence of any sexually transmitted infections should also be performed.

## HOW IS LGV TREATED?

The treatment course for LGV is longer than the treatment given for other types of chlamydia. It is treated with antibiotics such as doxycycline or erythromycin for 3 weeks or more.

## SHOULD MY SEXUAL PARTNERS ALSO BE TREATED?

It is extremely important to tell all recent sexual partners that you have been diagnosed with LGV, so they can be tested and treated. If necessary, we can help you notify your partners.

## HOW CAN I AVOID BECOMING INFECTED AGAIN?

The best way to prevent further infections is to practice safe sex by always using a condom.

This fact sheet is designed to provide you with information on Lymphogranuloma Venereum (LGV). It is not intended to replace the need for a consultation with your doctor. All clients are strongly advised to check with their doctor about any specific questions or concerns they may have. Every effort has been taken to ensure that the information in this pamphlet is correct at the time of printing.