

# What if I'm involved?

What does participation in the study involve?

Eligible women will be recruited from participating clinics in Victoria, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

## Part 1 – Chlamydia

A female research assistant sitting in each clinic will explain the study to you, and if you agree to take part, you will be asked to sign the Consent Form. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire that will take about 5-10 minutes. This questionnaire will ask you questions about your sexual health and whether you have any genital symptoms. In addition, you will be asked to provide 2 specimens to be tested for chlamydia, either a vaginal swab you collect yourself, or if your doctor does a genital examination, he or she may take the swabs. One specimen will be tested for chlamydia by the laboratory that your doctor uses. The other specimen will be stored at the Royal Women's Hospital and may be used at a later date for further testing by the researchers.

A vaginal swab that you take yourself is easy to do - the Research Assistant will give you instructions on how best to do it; it is a bit like inserting a small tampon. If you are menstruating (having your period), it doesn't matter – please still provide a specimen.

Your doctor will give you your initial chlamydia result and provide you with treatment if necessary. Your doctor will tell you when the results will be available.

We would like to contact you by mail 3, 6, 9 and 12 months after your first visit and ask you to answer a questionnaire at each time. We will also ask you to collect another vaginal swab for chlamydia testing at least twice during the 12 months. The exact times for collecting the swab will depend on whether your last test for chlamydia showed an infection or not. At a minimum, we will ask you to collect a swab at 6 and 12 months, but if a test is positive, it is recommended that you are tested again 3 months later.

We will send you a swab collection kit in the mail when necessary. The kit will consist of a vaginal swab and instructions on how to take the swab. Your name and contact details will not be recorded on the questionnaire or vaginal swab container – only a code will be used so that these are anonymous, protecting your confidentiality. We will ask you to post the swab and questionnaire in the supplied post pack and mail it in an Australian Post red mail-box. All postage will be prepaid. We will send you a message by telephone, SMS or email informing you to expect the specimen collection kit in the post shortly.

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Unless you tell us otherwise, your doctor will give you your chlamydia results and provide you with treatment if chlamydia is detected. Results should be available two weeks after you have posted the vaginal swab to the laboratory. We will supply the chlamydia treatment free of charge to you and your doctor.

If your test shows chlamydia at any stage in the project, we would like to conduct further tests on the sample you provide to determine the genotype (genetic type) of the infection. Like the common cold and the flu, there are many different types of chlamydia. This testing will help us to understand which types of chlamydia are present among Australian women.

You will be reimbursed \$10 for returning the questionnaire and specimen (if requested) at 3 months, \$20 at 6 months, \$20 at 9 months and a further \$50 at 12 months as recognition for your time and effort in participating in this project. These will be paid to you at the completion of the project.

We also seek your consent to keep your vaginal swabs at the Royal Women's Hospital for future testing if for example, improved technology becomes available or if any future research detects bacterial and other organisms that might be the cause of vaginal infections. You need to indicate if you would like us to contact you in the future with the results of these tests if they are considered to be important. Only a code will be recorded on these swabs so that they are anonymous, protecting your confidentiality.

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## Part 2 – other vaginal infections

If you consent to participate in part 2 of the project, we will test your vaginal swabs for Mycoplasma genitalium (MG) and bacterial vaginosis (BV).

The vaginal swab you provided for Part 1 will be able to be tested for these infections as well. However, you will also need to make a smear of the swab on a glass slide for testing for BV. This only means that the vaginal swab you have collected is also rolled across a glass slide after collection. It is simple and quick, and we will give you the swab, glass slide and instructions on how to do this.

Unless you tell us otherwise, your doctor will also give you your results for MG and provide treatment where necessary. Results should be available two weeks after you have posted the vaginal swab to the laboratory.

We will not be testing the swabs and glass slide for BV until the end of the study. This is because treatment is not recommended if you do not have any symptoms. If you have an unusual vaginal discharge or odour then please let your doctor know so that they can arrange for the appropriate tests to be done. We will be able to provide results for the BV tests at the end of the study if you indicate that you would like to know.

If you are diagnosed with chlamydia or MG, it is important that your sexual partner is also tested and treated to prevent you from becoming infected again. We will offer advice on how partners can be tested and treated should you be found to have chlamydia or MG.

Doctors and laboratories are required by law in every State and Territory in Australia to notify their health authority when detecting chlamydia infection. This is a routine practice and will not breach your privacy as name and contact details are not required by the health authorities.