UK NSC recommendation on screening for chlamydia in pregnancy

Following a review of the evidence against strict criteria, the UK NSC does not currently recommend screening for chlamydia in pregnancy

Chlamydia is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI) in the UK. But most people who have chlamydia do not have any obvious signs or symptoms, or the infection may be mild and go undetected. There are some reports that the untreated infection may cause problems during pregnancy, but the evidence on this is not clear. The newborn baby can also be infected; the most common problems for the baby are conjunctivitis and respiratory infections. Usually these are not too serious and can be treated effectively with antibiotics.

It has been suggested that offering screening to identify mothers with chlamydia may:

• prevent problems during pregnancy
• prevent mothers from passing the infection on to their babies

Key findings supporting the UK NSC recommendation

A national screening programme for chlamydia in pregnancy is not recommended in the UK because there is:

• currently not enough consistent evidence that having chlamydia in pregnancy will cause any adverse outcomes to the pregnancy
• no evidence that screening during pregnancy had benefits for the pregnancy or the baby outcomes
• no evidence on the effects of chlamydia treatment (antibiotics) during pregnancy

The UK NSC regularly reviews its recommendations on screening for different conditions in the light of new research evidence becoming available.

To find out more about the UK NSC’s recommendation on screening for chlamydia in pregnancy, please visit:

legacyscreening.phe.org.uk/chlamydia-pregnancy