Dear Alice,

Recently, my roommate had some people over while I was gone for the weekend, and one of his friends had sex and contracted chlamydia on my bed! Can chlamydia live in my sheets? How can I disinfect everything?!

Answer

Dear Reader,

Although the ick factor of anyone besides you and your partner having sex on your bed can be huge, rest assured that your chances of contracting chlamydia are practically nonexistent.

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by the bacterium *Chlamydia trachomatis*, which can only be spread through bodily fluids. This means that chlamydia can be passed through vaginal sex, anal sex, or from a mother to her child during birth. In rare instances, it can also be transmitted from the hand to the eye or through oral sex.

*Chlamydia cannot be spread through objects or surfaces, such as sheets or toilet seats. And, bodily fluids that contain the bacteria must come in direct contact with a partner's mucous membranes (the soft tissues that line the vagina, rectum, urethra, and other body parts) in order for the infection to spread. Even if some of the fluid got on the bed, it probably would have dried up? and the bacteria would have died? by the time you came back.*

*If the ick factor is still looming large in your head, you can toss your sheets, or all your washable bedding, into the wash. It's understandable that this can be bothersome and a nuisance, so you may also want to talk with your roommate about using your things when you're away so something like this doesn't happen again.*

Alice!

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