

FACT SHEET

Gonorrhea

What is gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is a very common sexually transmitted infection that can infect the genitals, rectum, and throat of both men and women. Gonorrhea often has no symptoms but can lead to serious complications such as infertility in both men and women.

How is it spread?

Gonorrhea can be spread during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. It can also be passed from an infected mother to her unborn child during vaginal birth.

Contact your doctor for testing and treatment. Remember, many people have no symptoms when infected.

What are the symptoms?

Many people have no symptoms when infected, but symptoms can include:

- Pain or burning with urination
- Discharge from the penis or vagina
- Painful or swollen testicles
- Bleeding between periods
- Anal itching
- Rectal soreness & bleeding
- Painful bowel movements

How can it be prevented?

Abstinence from sexual activity is the best form of protection. Latex condoms will offer some protection against gonorrhea. Being in a long-term, mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has been tested and known to be uninfected is another form of prevention.

How is it treated?

Gonorrhea can be treated with an antibiotic injection. It is becoming harder to treat gonorrhea because antibiotic-resistant strains of gonorrhea are becoming more and more common. Contact your doctor if your symptoms do not improve or resolve once treated. You should get re-tested three months after treatment to ensure you have not been re-infected.

Once diagnosed, make sure all recent sexual partners have been contacted and encouraged to seek treatment as well. All sex partners are recommended to be evaluated and treated at the same time to avoid reinfection. Sexual contact should be avoided for at least one week after treatment has been completed.

If gonorrhea is left untreated, it can result in ectopic pregnancy, infertility, and pelvic inflammatory disease. Talk to your healthcare provider about testing recommendations.

This fact sheet is for informational purposes only and is not intended for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information contact your health care provider or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov.