

What is Gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is a common sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by the bacterium *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*. This bacterium can infect the urinary tract, the genital area, the mouth, the nose, the eyes, and the anus in both men and women. In addition, gonorrhea can infect the reproductive organs.

Signs and Symptoms

For Men:

Many do not experience symptoms; however, if symptoms are present they can include:

- White, yellow, or green discharge from the penis
- Swelling and/or pain of the testicles or scrotum
- Painful or burning sensation while urinating

For Women:

Most have no symptoms; and, when symptoms are present, they are so nonspecific that they are mistaken for a different type of infection. These include:

- Painful or burning sensation during urination
- Vaginal discharge
- Vaginal bleeding between periods

For Rectal Infections:

- Anal discharge, itching, soreness, and/or bleeding
- Painful bowel movements

How is it spread?

Gonorrhea is spread during anal, vaginal, or oral sex with an infected partner. Gonorrhea can be transmitted even if a man does not ejaculate. An individual can be infected an unlimited number of times if they do not take the appropriate precautions. Mothers can also spread gonorrhea to their child during birth.

Treatment

Gonorrhea can be treated and cured with the appropriate therapies. Due to gonorrhea's resistance to some medications, the CDC now recommends treatment with two antibiotics instead of just one to fully cure the infection. To prevent further antibiotic resistance, make sure to take all of your medication as prescribed. If symptoms persist more than a few days after starting treatment, return to your healthcare provider for a reevaluation.

It is important to note that while antibiotics will cure the gonorrhea infection, they cannot reverse any permanent damage done by the disease.

Infected individuals should abstain from sex until treatment is over and symptoms have disappeared, and should also notify any sex partners from the last 2 months, so that they can be treated as well.

Prevention

- As always, abstaining from anal, vaginal, and oral sex is the most effective way to prevent chlamydia and other STIs.
- Use a condom correctly every time you have vaginal or anal sex, and use a dental dam during oral sex.
- Be part of a long-term, mutually monogamous relationship with someone who has been tested and is uninfected.

This fact sheet is for informational purposes and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care professional. For more information about communicable disease, speak to your health care provider or call the Ingham County Health Department at (517)-887-4308.

Visit our website at <http://hd.ingham.org>

or the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov/DiseasesConditions/>
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