

# Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea is a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) caused by a type of bacteria (*Neisseria gonorrhoea*) that can infect the throat, vagina, urethra and anus. It can be passed from one person to another during sex. It can also be passed to the newborn during delivery and cause serious problems.

## **People with a penis:**

Symptoms in the penis usually appear within 10 days after being exposed and may include:

- Discharge from the penis
- Pain or itching of the head of the penis
- Occasional swelling of the penis
- Pain with urination
- Occasionally, discharge may appear then go away without treatment. However, you may still be infected.

## **Throat:**

Gonorrhea can be transmitted to the throat by an infected penis. Most of the time there are no symptoms although it may cause a sore throat.

## **Rectum:**

If gonorrhea infects the anus/rectum, there may be discharge, pain, bleeding, or anal itching. As in the throat, there may be no symptoms at all.

## **People with a vagina:**

There are often no symptoms. If symptoms develop, they usually appear within 10 days after being exposed and may include:

- Discharge from the vagina
- Lower abdominal pain, especially with sex
- Unusual vaginal bleeding with cramping
- Pain with urination

- It can be. Gonorrhea may cause a serious infection of the epididymis/testicles (balls) which can cause pain and lead to infertility (blockage of sperm). In people with a vagina, gonorrhea may lead to a serious infection called pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). PID can damage the fallopian tubes and make a “tubal pregnancy” (outside the uterus) more likely. PID can also lead to infertility, the inability to get pregnant.
- Gonorrhea can increase the risk of getting and passing HIV and other STDs. If you have been diagnosed with gonorrhea make sure you also get tested for HIV. Rectal gonorrhea puts you at particularly high risk of getting HIV. If you have contracted rectal gonorrhea and are HIV-negative, talk to your health care provider about PrEP.

- The recommended treatment for gonorrhea is an injection of an antibiotic which will cure the infection. Avoid having sex for seven days after your treatment and until symptoms have gone away.
- Your sex partner(s) should be examined and treated. If not treated, they can give the infection back to you or infect others.
- Retest for gonorrhea in 3 months. If you have gonorrhea of the throat, you may be asked to repeat your throat swab about 2 weeks after treatment.

- Condoms are effective in reducing the risk of infection.
- Ask your health care provider about doxyPEP.
- Do not have sex if you or a sexual partner has symptoms of an STI, including discharge, burning with urination, rash, or genital sores.

**For more information:**

Please talk with your City Clinic clinician or your own health care provider. The following websites also offer helpful information:

**General STI**

[www.ashasexualhealth.org](http://www.ashasexualhealth.org) (also in Español)

[www.cdc.gov/std/](http://www.cdc.gov/std/)

[www.sfcityclinic.org](http://www.sfcityclinic.org)

[www.sfsi.org/](http://www.sfsi.org/)

**Contraception and STI/sex info**

[www.bedsider.org](http://www.bedsider.org)

**Teens**

[www.iwannaknow.org](http://www.iwannaknow.org)

[www.kidshealth.org/teen](http://www.kidshealth.org/teen) (also in Español)

[www.scarleteen.com](http://www.scarleteen.com)

For a STI check-up or treatment,  
see your health care provider, local clinic, or come to:



A landmark in prevention

City Clinic  
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[www.sfcityclinic.org](http://www.sfcityclinic.org)