

Gonorrhea

FACT SHEET

What is Gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by bacteria.

Who Can Get Gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is passed on through sexual contact. The infection passes from one person to another through body fluids from the penis, vagina, mouth or rectum. Babies can get the infection in their eyes at the time of birth if the mother is infected.

What are the Symptoms?

Many people can have gonorrhea without any symptoms at all. Symptoms usually start from 2-7 days after contact with a person who has been infected. There may be other sexually transmitted diseases present, so individuals should be checked for other diseases when they see the doctor.

Symptoms to look for are:

- Unusual discharge from the penis, vagina or rectum
- Pain or burning when urinating
- Pain or cramping in the lower abdominal area for women
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Pain in the testicles for men

What is the Treatment?

Gonorrhea can be treated with antibiotics. A swab is taken and antibiotics are prescribed for the infected individual and their partner(s). In the past, penicillin was the only antibiotic used to treat gonorrhea; now other antibiotics are used against the resistant strains like PPNG (see PPNG Fact Sheet). While on antibiotics the individual should refrain from sexual contact. If you have gonorrhea you should inform all your sexual partners so that they can be tested.

How Can You Prevent Gonorrhea?

You can reduce your risk of getting gonorrhea by:

- Limiting the number of sexual partners you have
- Seeing your doctor if you have any of the above symptoms
- Learning about prevention and control of sexually transmitted diseases
- Practicing safer sex