

## Gonorrhea

### What is Gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by infection with the *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* bacterium. *N. gonorrhoeae* infects the mucous membranes of the reproductive tract, including the cervix, uterus, and fallopian tubes in women, and the urethra in women and men. *N. gonorrhoeae* can also infect the mucous membranes of the mouth, throat, eyes, and rectum.

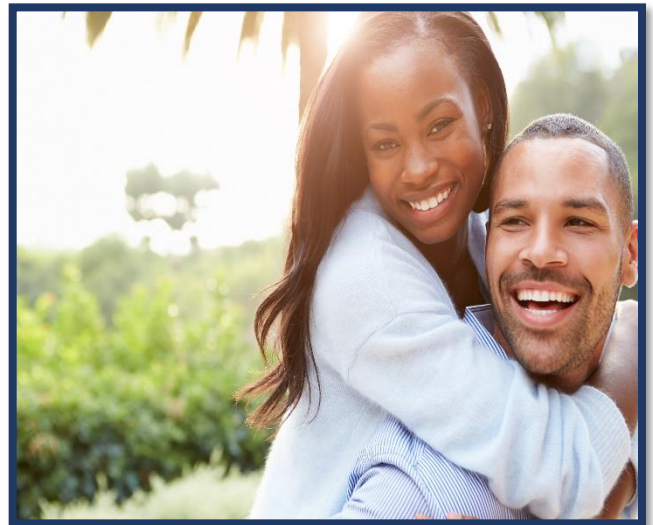
### How do you get Gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is transmitted through sexual contact with the penis, vagina, mouth, or anus of an infected partner. Ejaculation does not have to occur for gonorrhea to be transmitted or acquired. Gonorrhea can also be spread perinatally from mother to baby during childbirth.

People who have had gonorrhea and received treatment may be reinfected if they have sexual contact with a person infected with gonorrhea.

### How common is Gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is a very common infectious disease. CDC estimates that approximately 1.6 million new gonococcal infections occurred in the United States in 2018, and more than half occur among young people aged 15-24. Gonorrhea is the second most commonly reported bacterial sexually transmitted infection in the United States.



### What are the symptoms of Gonorrhea for men?

- Burning sensation when urinating
- White, yellow, or green discharge from the penis
- Painful or swollen testicles
- Some men experience no symptoms

### What are the symptoms of Gonorrhea for women?

Most women experience no symptoms, but mild symptoms may occur such as:

- Painful or burning sensation when urinating
- Increased vaginal discharge
- Bleeding between periods

### What are the symptoms of a throat or rectal Gonorrhea infection?

Symptoms of a rectal infection in men and women can include discharge, anal itching, soreness, bleeding, and painful bowel movements. Infections in the throat can cause a sore throat. Both rectal and throat infections may not show any symptoms at all.

## **What are the complications of Gonorrhea for women?**

Gonorrhea can spread to the uterus and fallopian tubes and cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). PID can cause long term damage to the reproductive system and make a woman unable to have children.

## **What are the complications of Gonorrhea for men?**

Gonorrhea can cause a condition in men called epididymitis. This condition occurs in the tubes attached to the testicles and can be very painful. In some cases, epididymitis can make a man unable to have children.

## **How is Gonorrhea diagnosed?**

Urogenital gonorrhea can be diagnosed by testing urine, urethral (for men), or endocervical or vaginal (for women) specimens. FDA-cleared rectal and oral diagnostic tests for gonorrhea (as well as chlamydia) have been validated for clinical use.

## **What is the treatment for Gonorrhea?**

Gonorrhea can be cured with the right treatment. CDC now recommends a single 500 mg intramuscular dose of ceftriaxone for the treatment of gonorrhea. Alternative regimens are available when ceftriaxone cannot be used to treat urogenital or rectal gonorrhea. Although medication will stop the infection, it will not repair any permanent damage done by the disease. Because re-infection is common, men and women with gonorrhea should be retested three months after treatment of the initial infection, regardless of whether they believe that their sex partners were successfully treated.

## **How can Gonorrhea be prevented?**

Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, can reduce the risk of transmission of gonorrhea. The surest way to avoid transmission of gonorrhea or other STDs is to abstain from vaginal, anal, and oral sex, or to be in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has been tested and is known to be uninfected.

## **For more information:**

Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <https://www.cdc.gov/std/gonorrhea/stdfact-gonorrhea-detailed.htm> or call Huron County Public Health at 419-668-1652 ext. 269.

