

Gonorrhea

District of Columbia
Department of Health
STD Control Program

FACT SHEET

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**Prevention
Protects
Your
Health**



Government of the
District of Columbia
Adrian M. Fenty, Mayor

Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by a bacteria called Neisseria gonorrhoeae. The infection is highly contagious and is spread from person to person during unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sex. It can also be passed from mother to baby during birth.

Symptoms

Men

- Discharge from penis
- Pain or burning sensation when urinating
- Sore throat (if performing unprotected oral sex)
- Discharge in stools and rectal itching (if receiving unprotected anal sex)
- Men who have gonorrhea that is left untreated can result in a serious complication: Epididymitis (an infection of the testicles and surrounding area that can lead to infertility)

For men, symptoms of gonorrhea usually appear 1-10 days after exposure.

Women

- Discharge from vagina
- Lower abdominal pain
- Pain when urinating
- Sore throat (if performing unprotected oral sex)
- Symptoms often appear during periods
- Pain or discomfort during sex
- Discharge in stools and rectal itching (if receiving unprotected anal sex)



Use condoms correctly
and consistently to protect
you and your partner

Serious complications can occur in women who have gonorrhea who are not treated:

- Pelvic inflammatory disease (a serious pelvic infection in women)
- Ectopic (tubal) pregnancies
- Infertility

Women who have gonorrhea often have no symptoms of the infection.

Testing

Men

- If the male client has no symptoms of gonorrhea, the clinician may request a urine sample that will be sent to the lab for analysis.
- If the male client is symptomatic, a urethral examination will be performed.
- During a urethral exam, the clinician will wipe the opening of the penis with a small swab. The sample is then placed on a glass slide that will be stained with dye and then viewed under a microscope.

Women

- If the female client has no symptoms of gonorrhea and declines a pelvic exam, the clinician may request a urine sample that will be sent to the lab for analysis. However, it is recommended at all female clients have a pelvic exam performed during the clinic visit.
- During the pelvic exam, a speculum will be inserted into the vagina. The clinician will use two small swabs to collect a sample of discharge from the vagina. The sample of discharge is placed on a glass slide and viewed under the microscope.

Treatment

- Gonorrhea is treated with antibiotics. Commonly used medications include Rocephin (injection) and Cefixime (pills or liquid). Both medications are equally effective.
- Since the symptoms of gonorrhea and chlamydia are similar and both diseases can occur at the same time, most people who are treated for gonorrhea are also treated for chlamydia.
- It is recommended that individuals be re-screened three months after receiving treatment.

Prevention Tips

- Avoid unprotected sexual contact. Always use a condom during vaginal, anal, and oral sex
- Have only one sex partner
- If you are treated for gonorrhea, notify your sex partners to avoid re-infection

If you have questions or think you may have Gonorrhea stop having sex and come to the S.E. STD Clinic for a **FREE** and **CONFIDENTIAL** Assessment.