



## Gonorrhea Fact Sheet

### What is gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is a common sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by the gonorrhea bacterium (*Neisseria gonorrhoeae*). Gonorrhea can grow and multiply in the urethra (urine tube), the cervix (opening to the womb), the uterus (womb) and in the throat, in the eyes and in the anus.

### How does gonorrhea spread?

Gonorrhea can spread during sex, especially unprotected sex. Gonorrhea can also be passed from a mom to her baby during childbirth.

### What are the symptoms of gonorrhea?

#### Men/Guys

Some guys with gonorrhea won't have symptoms. Some guys may have a burning sensation when they pee and they may notice a white, yellow or green discharge (drip) from the penis. Some may also have painful or swollen testicles.

#### Women/Girls

Most women don't have any symptoms. Some women may have burning when then they pee, bleeding between periods or increased vaginal discharge. Like chlamydia, untreated infections can cause serious problems, including problems getting pregnant later on.

#### Rectal Infection

Symptoms of rectal infection in both men and women may include discharge, anal itching, soreness, bleeding, or painful bowel movements. Rectal infection also may cause no symptoms.

#### Throat Infections

Infections in the throat may cause a sore throat but usually causes no symptoms.

### How long does it take for symptoms to appear?

Many people with gonorrhea never develop symptoms. In those who do get symptoms, they usually appear between 1-14 days after infection.

### How long can a person with gonorrheal infection spread it to his or her partners?

People with infection can spread gonorrhea until the infection is treated with the right medicines (antibiotics). If you get treated and have sex with your partner who did not get treated, you can get it again.

### How does gonorrhea affect a pregnant woman and her baby?

Babies who are born to moms with gonorrhea can go blind or get infections in their joints. Babies can also have blood infections, which are life-threatening. Women who are pregnant and at risk of gonorrhea should have an exam, get tested and treated (if needed) by a health care provider as soon as possible.

### How is gonorrhea diagnosed?

Your health care provider can use laboratory tests to see if you have gonorrhea. Some tests can be performed on urine, and other tests require a swab from inside the penis or inside the cervix.



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### What is the treatment for gonorrhea?

If you have gonorrhea, don't panic. Gonorrhea can be treated (and cured!) with the right medicine (antibiotics). However, drug-resistant strains of gonorrhea are on the rise. Because of this, treating gonorrhea successfully is getting harder.

Because many people with gonorrhea also have chlamydia, another similar STD, antibiotics for both infections are usually given together. Persons with gonorrhea should be tested for other STIs.

All of your sex partners should be evaluated, tested, and treated. You should avoid having sex until your sex partner(s) have been treated. If you have sex and your partner didn't get treated, you can get it again. Getting gonorrhea or chlamydia more than once can put women at risk for more serious medical problems, including not being able to get pregnant later on.

### How can gonorrhea be prevented?

You can avoid getting STDs in a couple of different ways. First, if you don't have sex, you can't get infected.

But if you do have sex, you can reduce your risk of an STD by having one partner who is STD-free. Know your partner. Talk to your partner about condoms and preventing STDs/HIV and getting pregnant.

Get yourself tested for STDs if you are at risk. Anyone in Illinois who is 12 or older can get tested without their parents' consent.