

Gonorrhea Fact Sheet

Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by a bacterium

Neisseria gonorrhoeae is the bacterium that causes gonorrhea.

Gonorrhea is spread by sexual contact and from mother to baby during delivery

Gonorrhea is found in infected body fluids from the penis, vagina, mouth or rectum, and spread by direct sexual contact. A baby's eyes can get infected if his or her mother has a cervical infection at the time of birth.

Signs and symptoms to look for:

- Discharge from the penis, vagina, or rectum
- Sore throat, possibly with difficulty swallowing
- For women, cramps or pain in the lower abdomen
- Pain in the testicles in men
- Pain when urinating

Symptoms can start from 2 to 7 days after infection. Many people can have gonorrhea and spread it without having any symptoms at all. Gonorrhea may get into the blood and may rarely settle in other parts of the body causing infection of the joints, skin, heart, and brain. In women, pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) may occur, causing chronic pain and making it very difficult to have children.

Gonorrhea can be treated with antibiotics

Several different antibiotics can be used to treat gonorrhea, such as ceftriaxone, ciprofloxacin, cefixime, or azithromycin. Anyone treated for gonorrhea should also be treated for chlamydia (another STD).

Gonorrhea is preventable

- Avoid infection by abstaining from sex, or by only having sex with one person who only has sex with you.
- Use condoms each and every time you have sex.
- Know the signs of gonorrhea.

If you think you or your partners have gonorrhea or another STD, do not have sex until you see your doctor

If you have gonorrhea, tell your partners so they can be treated

Do not have sex until both you and your partners have completed treatment