



# Gonorrhoea

## **What is gonorrhoea?**

- Gonorrhoea is a sexually transmitted infection caused by the bacteria *Neisseria gonorrhoea*.
- Gonorrhoea can lead to serious health problems if left untreated.

## **How do you get gonorrhoea?**

- When you have unprotected oral, vaginal, or anal sex with an infected person.
- If you are pregnant you can pass it to your baby while giving birth.
- If infected fluid comes in contact with your eyes either directly or spread by hand

## **How can you tell if you have gonorrhoea?**

**Some people who have gonorrhoea do not have any signs of infection. You can pass gonorrhoea to someone else without even knowing it.**

Men might notice one or more of:

- a discharge from the penis
- a burning feeling when you pee
- pain in the testicles
- itching at the end of the penis

Women might notice one or more of:

- an unusual discharge from the vagina
- a burning feeling when you pee
- pain in the lower abdomen
- abnormal vaginal bleeding, for example, between periods, during or after having sex
- pain during sex

In both men and women:

- An oral infection may have no symptoms or a sore throat.
- an anal infection may have symptoms such as pain, bleeding and discharge.

## **How do you get tested for gonorrhoea?**

Both men and women can have a test for gonorrhoea simply by giving a urine sample or by having a swab taken from the infected area.

For the urine test, it is important not to pee for two hours before the test is taken.

A test for chlamydia, which is often present when you have gonorrhoea, can be done at the same time.

## **How is gonorrhoea treated?**

When you test positive for gonorrhoea you and your partner(s) must be treated. A health care provider will prescribe an antibiotic that will treat and cure gonorrhoea.

It is important to:

- treat gonorrhoea to avoid serious infection, re-infection and complications.
- take and finish all the medication
- not have oral, vaginal or anal sex during treatment and for seven days after both you and your sex partner(s) have finished treatment.

## **Do you need follow-up?**

You may need to be tested after treatment if:

- you vomited the medication
- there is a chance you were re-infected
- you are pregnant.
- your symptoms did not go away.

Everyone who has tested positive for gonorrhoea should have the test repeated in six months.

**Over** 

## **Who can you talk to if you have more questions?**

If you have concerns or questions call and ask for Sexual Health, or visit our youth website at [www.thephakz.ca](http://www.thephakz.ca), or the health unit website below.

You can expect to be contacted by a nurse from the health unit who will talk with you about the treatment and prevention of this infection in the future. The nurse will also talk to you about your partner(s).

***How do you protect yourself and others?***

- Abstain from sex or limit your number of sex partners
- Make informed decisions by talking to your partner about his/her sexual health and the use of protection, BEFORE having sex
- Always use a condom or barrier for vaginal, oral and anal sex
- Get an STI check up—especially if you’ve had a new sex partner, more than one sex partner, or suspect you have an infection
- Ask your partner(s) to get tested before you have sex
- Not all STIs can be routinely tested:
- Consider getting immunized for STIs such as hepatitis B and Human Papillomavirus (HPV)
- Recognize that alcohol and drug use prior to sex can affect your decision to have safer sex.

***Are there any special concerns about gonorrhea?***

- Because there are often no symptoms, you may not seek medical attention. If the infection is not treated you may develop serious health problems.
- Gonorrhea can increase the risk of transmission of HIV.
- For women:
  - Can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), causing pain and increasing the risk of scarring in the fallopian tubes which can lead to tubal (ectopic) pregnancy or infertility
  - If you are pregnant and have untreated gonorrhea your baby could get eye and other serious infections.

- For Men:
  - Gonorrhea can cause pain and swelling in the testicles
  - It can occasionally cause sterility
- For both men and women:
  - Untreated gonorrhea can spread to your joints and cause arthritis (called Reiter’s syndrome) or spread to other areas of your body.

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