



GONORRHEA



WHAT IS GONORRHEA?

Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted disease that can cause infection in the genitals, rectum, and throat. It is very common among sexually active young people ages 15-24 years.

WHO CAN GET GONORRHEA?

Anyone sexually active can get gonorrhea.

WHAT ARE SYMPTOMS OF GONORRHEA?

Symptoms start to show up after a week of infection. It can vary from person to person. Some people may not show any symptoms.

Gonorrhea often has no symptoms, but it can cause serious health problems, even without symptoms.

Most women with gonorrhea do not have any symptoms. Even when a woman has symptoms, they are often mild and can be mistaken for a bladder or vaginal infection.

Symptoms in women can include:

- Painful or burning sensation when peeing.
- Increased vaginal discharge; and
- Vaginal bleeding between periods.

Men who do have symptoms may have:

- A burning sensation when peeing.
- A white, yellow, or green discharge from the penis; and
- Painful or swollen testicles (although this is less common).

Rectal infections may either cause no symptoms or cause symptoms in both men and women that may include:

- Discharge
- Anal itching
- Soreness
- Bleeding; and
- Painful bowel movements.

See your healthcare provider if you notice any of these symptoms. You should also see a provider if your partner has an STD or symptoms of one. Symptoms can include an unusual sore, a smelly discharge, burning when peeing, or bleeding between periods.

HOW IS GONORRHEA SPREAD?

You can get gonorrhea by having vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who has gonorrhea. A pregnant person with gonorrhea can give the infection to their baby during childbirth.

HOW IS GONORRHEA DIAGNOSED?

Most of the time, a healthcare provider will use a urine sample to diagnose gonorrhea. However, if you have had oral and/or anal sex, your healthcare provider may use swabs to collect samples from your throat and/or rectum. In some cases, a healthcare provider may also use a swab to collect a sample from a man's urethra (urine canal) or a woman's cervix (opening to the womb).

HOW IS GONORRHEA TREATED?

The right antibiotic can cure gonorrhea. It is important that you take all the medicine your healthcare provider gives you to cure your infection. Do not share medicine for gonorrhea with anyone. Although medicine will stop the infection, it will not undo any permanent damage caused by the disease.

Return to a healthcare provider if your symptoms continue for more than a few days after receiving treatment.

HOW CAN I HELP PREVENT GONORRHEA?

Wait seven days after finishing all medicine before having sex. You and your sex partner(s) should avoid having sex until you have each completed treatment, and your symptoms are gone. This will help prevent you and your partner(s) from giving or getting gonorrhea again. Those with gonorrhea should be retested about three months after treatment of an initial infection, even if their partners received successful treatment.

If you've had gonorrhea and took medicine in the past, you can still get it again. This happens if you have sex without a condom with a person who has gonorrhea.

Gonorrhea is a Washington State reportable disease and must be reported to your local health department in Lewis County, contact Communicable Disease Surveillance and Response at 360-740-1223 during business hours or leave a voicemail on our confidential reporting after hours line at 360-740-1275.