

# Gonorrhea

## 1. What is gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by bacteria (germs). Gonorrhea can be cured with antibiotics. Having gonorrhea can increase your chances of getting HIV.

## 2. How is this disease spread?

You can get gonorrhea by having unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who has gonorrhea. It's passed through contact with semen, vaginal fluids, or discharge. In women, gonorrhea infects the cervix (the opening to the uterus) and can be found in vaginal fluids. In men, these bacteria infect the urethra, where urine (pee) and semen come out. Gonorrhea can also infect the rectum or throat. Pregnant women can spread gonorrhea to their newborn(s) during childbirth.

## 3. What are the symptoms of this disease?

Most people with gonorrhea don't have symptoms. If symptoms develop, they usually happen within 2 weeks of being infected. It may hurt or burn when you urinate (pee). Men often develop a white, yellow, or green discharge from the penis. Symptoms in women may be mild and include increased vaginal discharge or bleeding between periods. Rectal infections can cause anal discharge, itching, soreness or bleeding in both men and women. Infections in the throat can cause some soreness or redness, but these symptoms are rare.

## 4. How can I get tested?

To get tested for gonorrhea, go to a doctor or health clinic. There are free or low cost, confidential testing sites available around Los Angeles County. Visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/dhsp/STDClinics.htm> to find a local clinic. Make sure to get your gonorrhea test results and follow your doctor's medical advice.

## 5. How is this disease treated?

Gonorrhea can be treated and cured with two different types of antibiotics taken at the same time. Usually, you will need to get a shot and also swallow pills. It takes 1 week for the medicine to completely cure gonorrhea. Make sure both you and your sex partner(s) are cured before having sex again. If gonorrhea isn't treated, it can cause difficulties getting pregnant or painful infection of the testicles.

## 6. How can I prevent this disease?

- Use condoms.
- Limit your sex partners.
- Pregnant women should get prenatal care early, to prevent spreading gonorrhea to their baby.
- If you don't have a regular doctor, call the free STD hotline (800) 758-0880 to find free testing and treatment.



### Key Points:

- Gonorrhea is very common, especially among people 15-24 years old.
- Most people with gonorrhea don't have symptoms, but they can still spread it.
- Many medicines that used to cure gonorrhea don't work anymore.
- Gonorrhea is treated and cured with 2 antibiotics taken at the same time.
- Use condoms to prevent the spread of gonorrhea.

### For more information:

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health  
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/dhsp/GCinfo.htm>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
<https://www.cdc.gov/std/gonorrhea/>