



## 1. What is gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea (gon-or-rhe-a), also called "the clap," "the drip," or GC, is a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Having gonorrhea can increase a person's chance of getting HIV.

## 2. How do you get gonorrhea?

Anyone can get gonorrhea by having unprotected vaginal, anal or oral sex with a person who has the infection. Gonorrhea is passed through semen and vaginal fluids. It infects a woman's cervix or urethra. It also infects a man's urethra (the tube where urine and semen come out). It can also infect the rectum and throat of men and women. A pregnant woman with gonorrhea can also pass it on to her newborn baby during childbirth.

## 3. How do you know if you have gonorrhea?

Most people with gonorrhea do not know they have it. Even without symptoms, the disease can still be passed on to others. If symptoms occur, they may show up 2-5 days after infection. They may include:

- A white, yellow or green discharge from the penis, vagina or anus
- Pain or burning when urinating
- Fever
- Pain in the abdomen or unusual, heavy periods or bleeding between periods

## 4. What problems does gonorrhea cause if it is not treated?

If it goes untreated, gonorrhea can spread in the reproductive organs.

- Women can get Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID). This condition causes scarring and inflammation of the fallopian tubes and ovaries. It can lead to chronic pelvic pain, an increased risk of a life-threatening ectopic (tubal) pregnancy, and infertility.
- Men can get epididymitis, which is a painful infection of the testicles that can cause a man to become sterile.
- A newborn baby may develop an eye infection that can cause blindness if a mother with gonorrhea is not treated before giving birth.

## 5. How do you get tested for gonorrhea?

Do not diagnose yourself at home. Go to a doctor or a health clinic to be tested. Most clinics offer a test that only needs a urine sample. Some women may have a pelvic exam, where a cotton swab is used to take a sample from the cervix to test for gonorrhea.

## 6. How is gonorrhea treated?

Gonorrhea can be treated with certain antibiotics. Both you and your sex partner(s) must take all of the medicine prescribed by a health care provider before having sex again. This is to prevent passing the disease back again between partners. Antibiotics treat different types of diseases, so medicine prescribed for another purpose or for someone else will not treat gonorrhea. See a doctor before taking any medications.

## 7. How can gonorrhea be prevented?

- Latex condoms provide excellent protection against gonorrhea during oral, vaginal or anal sex. The female condom and polyurethane (plastic) condoms are equally effective.
- Limit the number of sex partners.
- Talk to your partner about STDs before having sex.
- Get tested for STDs at least once a year.
- Avoid sexual contact with someone who has gonorrhea until they have been treated.
- If you are pregnant or think you are pregnant, get early prenatal care to prevent passing the infection to your baby.

### Sources

1. *Gonorrhea*. L.A. Department of Public Health. <http://www.lapublichealth.org/std/gonorrhea.htm>
2. *Gonorrhea*. California Department of Public Health. <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Gonorrhea.aspx>
3. *Gonorrhea*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/std/Gonorrhea/>

For additional resources, please visit the L.A. County Department of Public Health website <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov>.