

GONORRHEA FACT SHEET

What is Gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is a bacterial sexually transmitted infection (STI) that can be passed between sexual partners through penetrative (oral, vaginal, or anal) sex. Gonorrhea is an increasingly common STI, particularly among young adults, and is often present without any symptoms. If left untreated, gonorrhea may lead to more serious infections or infertility.

How can I prevent gonorrhea infection?

If you are sexually active, you can decrease your risk of gonorrhea infection by:

- using condoms and dental dams properly during vaginal, anal, and oral sex
- (dental dams available on-line or at Good Vibrations store in Berkeley)
- getting tested for STIs regularly and encouraging partners to do the same
- communicating your results and status to current and future partner(s)
- reducing your number of sex partners

How do you get Gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is transmitted through vaginal, anal, or oral sex, when one person's mucous membranes come into contact with the infected genital secretions (vaginal fluids, semen, pre-ejaculate) of an infected partner. Gonorrhea may also be transmitted from an infected woman to her newborn during childbirth.

Symptoms

Gonorrhea is often asymptomatic (without symptoms) in people with penises or vaginas. When symptoms are present, they may take up to two weeks or so to appear.

Common symptoms for people *with vaginas* may include:

- abnormal vaginal discharge (e.g., color, odor, and/or texture)
- pain or burning with urination
- pain or discomfort during sex
- rectal pain, discharge or bleeding
- pelvic or lower abdominal pain

If left untreated, chlamydia may lead to more serious complications for women/those with vaginas including pelvic infections, infertility and ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy outside the uterus).

Common symptoms for people *with penises* may include:

- discharge from penis
- painful or frequent urination
- pain or discomfort during sex
- swollen penis or testes
- rectal pain, discharge or bleeding
- Inflammation of prostate or epididymis.
- Urethral stricture (if left untreated)

Less common symptoms for all people include:

- Painless infection in the throat (if condomless oral sex),
- Gonorrhea can enter the bloodstream and cause painful swollen joints or rash.

Symptoms of gonorrhea are often mild and may go unnoticed until it progresses to more serious infections such as pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) in women and epididymitis in men, which can cause fevers, pelvic or testicular pain, internal scarring, and possible infertility.

Testing for Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea is diagnosed by a urine test and/or vaginal, anal, and throat swabs. Also, since gonorrhea may only be detectable at one of the sites where you have sex (and not others), it's also important for anyone engaging in receptive anal or receptive oral sex to have an anal and/or oral swab for gonorrhea. We advise being tested for ALL STDs if you are at risk (i.e. have had condomless sex at any orifice)

Treatment

Gonorrhea is often curable with the appropriate treatment which includes both an antibiotic injection and oral antibiotics. It is important to complete all gonorrhea medication even if symptoms are no longer present, and to remain abstinent for at least one week after both you and your partners are treated.

Partner Notification and Treatment

Infected persons should inform all vaginal, anal, and/or oral sex partners within the past 2 months. Sharing your status will allow your partners to get tested and treated and helps reduce your risk of re-infection. Partners should be treated regardless of whether they test positive for gonorrhea. Partners should schedule a follow-up appointment with their regular medical provider and we advise they be tested for ALL STDs (gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis and HIV)

Follow-up Care and Testing

Recently, there has been an increase in cases of antibiotic-resistant gonorrhea, making treatment more difficult. If symptoms persist a few days into antibiotic treatment, you may have an antibiotic resistant strain of gonorrhea, and should go back to your medical provider for further evaluation and a new treatment plan.

Gonorrhea infections can often occur with other sexually transmitted infections. For this reason, if you are diagnosed with gonorrhea, it is strongly recommended that you are tested for other common STIs as well, including chlamydia, syphilis, and HIV.

After completing treatment for gonorrhea patients should return for re-testing in 3 months to see if you have been re-infected. You can now order your own STD tests up to every 6 months on the Tang portal so if you feel you are at risk, get tested!

Gonorrhea Resources

Tang Center	Online
<p>Clinical Health Education: Free 60-minute health coaching session with a professional health educator to talk about a personal STI prevention plan, how to make safer sex fun, sexual communication, etc. All genders and orientations welcome. 642-2000 or see link below for online scheduling</p> <p>Advice Nurse: Ask a medical question or find out if you need an appointment. 643-7197 or see link below for options</p> <p>Medical Appointment: Get an STI test or meet with a clinician. 642-2000/see link below for online scheduling</p> <p>Urgent Care: 642-3188 Urgent care sees students for immediate problems and symptoms. See link below for information</p> <p>See: https://uhs.berkeley.edu for health information, services available and scheduling an appointment at the Tang Center</p>	<p>Center for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/std/gonorrhea/stdfact-gonorrhea.htm</p> <p>Sexual Health Education Program (SHEP): 642-3620 Trained peer educators are happy to talk with you about sexual health via social media, workshops for your student groups, and more! Interactive safer sex supply map and Q&A available online. http://sheptalk.wordpress.com/</p> <p>San Francisco City Clinic: STD Information and basics chart depicting potential STD risk based on behaviors. http://sfcityclinic.org/stdbasics/stdchart.asp</p> <p>Planned Parenthood: Information on safer sex, contraception, STIs, sexuality, and more. http://www.plannedparenthood.org</p>