



Gonorrhoea

What is Gonorrhoea?

Gonorrhoea is a bacterial infection that can be serious if not treated early, especially for women. Gonorrhoea in women, if left untreated could lead to a painful, long-term condition called PID (pelvic inflammatory disease) and infertility (the inability to have children). Gonorrhoea can also cause sterility in men if scar tissue blocks the tube that carry the sperm.

What are the signs and symptoms?

If you get gonorrhoea from having sex with an infected partner, you might not notice any symptoms. If you do, they will usually appear three to five days after sex. Signs of gonorrhoea can take 2 to 10 days to show up, and sometimes even longer. Some women mistake their symptoms for bladder or vaginal infections.

Even if you don't have symptoms, you can have gonorrhoea and you can pass it on to others.

Oral sex can also cause gonorrhoea in the throat for both men and women. This may cause a sore throat and swollen glands, or there may be no symptoms.

How is it diagnosed?

To test for gonorrhoea, a swab of the genital area in men or women is usually taken, or a urine test may be used for either.

How is it treated?

Gonorrhoea is often treated with a combination of two antibiotics. But you can get it again right away from your partner if he/she isn't treated as well. Once diagnosed, all sexual partners within the last 60 days should be tested and treated. See a doctor or go to the sexual health clinic and, if you have gonorrhoea, tell your partner.

How is it prevented?

To prevent re-infection, Public Health recommends avoiding sexual intercourse, even with a condom, for at least seven days following treatment of both partners. Remember to always practice safer sex and use condoms. This will lower the risk of getting gonorrhoea or other sexually transmitted infections (STI's).

If you suspect you have gonorrhoea, visit your health care provider or sexual health clinic to get tested immediately.

What to look for

Women:

- New or different discharge from the vagina.
- A burning feeling when urinating.
- Pain in the lower abdomen.
- Fever and chills.
- Pain during sex.
- Vaginal bleeding between periods.
- Vaginal bleeding after intercourse.
- Possible rectal pain.
- Rectal discharge.

Men:

- Discharge from the penis; it may be thick and yellow-green in colour.
- Itching around the urethra.
- Burning feeling when urinating.
- Pain or swelling in the testicles.
- Possible rectal pain.
- Rectal discharge.



For more information, please contact a Public Health Nurse on the Infectious Disease Team at the Haldimand-Norfolk Health unit.

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