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Gonorrhea (a.k.a The Clap)

Information here is general in nature. You should always consult a health professional for health problems.

Gonorrhea (it's pronounced "Gone-or-ee-yah") is one of the best known STDs. Except for [Chlamydia](#), it is the most commonly reported STD. It's a bacterial infection that can infect the female's cervix, both male and female's urethra (where your urine comes out), the throat, or anus.

Things to know:

Gonorrhea is transmitted when a penis enters a vagina, mouth, or anus. Less likely, but still possible, it can also be spread by mouth to anus contact, or if fingers carry the bacteria from an infected anus, mouth or vagina and then to your own anus, mouth or vagina.

A condom will greatly cut down on your chances of becoming infected, or of passing on an infection. But remember the other possible ways of infection, noted above.

Once antibiotic treatment is successful, you cannot infect someone else but you must wait until the treatment is done and you've been double checked by the doctor. However, you can also be re-infected by Gonorrhea if you get exposed to it again.

Many people who have Gonorrhea also have a Chlamydia infection.

Symptoms :

It generally takes between one and fourteen days to notice signs of infection, though you may not notice any signs, especially if you are a woman.

Men's symptoms are more noticeable.

Men may notice a yellow or white discharge from their penis

There may be pain or a burning feeling when urinating (peeing)

There may be irritation or discharge from the anus if the anus has been infected

There may be pain, swelling and discharge if the throat has been infected

There may be inflammation of testicles and possibly the [prostate gland](#).

There may be blood in the urine

There may be swelling of glands in the groin

The head of the penis may turn red and irritated

If men do not get treated, pain and inflammation will develop in the testicles and prostate gland. Eventually more pain will result from abscesses (pus from tissue disintegration and surrounded by an inflamed area) and narrowing of the urethra (where urine comes out).

Women's symptoms

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Women may notice a change in vaginal discharge. There may be more of it, and/or it could change to a yellow or green tinted colour, with a strong odour.

There may be pain or a burning feeling when urinating (peeing)

There may be irritation or discharge from the anus if the anus has been infected

There may be pain, swelling and discharge if the throat has been infected

There may be abnormal bleeding

There may be irritation on the outer genitals

If Gonorrhoea is left untreated in a woman, she can, besides being contagious, develop [PID](#) (Pelvic Inflammatory Disease). If you are pregnant, your baby can be born with Gonorrhoea bacteria in its eyes (called a Gonococcal eye infection) which can cause blindness if not treated. That can be treated with antibiotics but of course it's best to prevent the baby from becoming infected.

Testing:

You can get tested as soon as you suspect you may have been exposed to Gonorrhoea. Contact your family doctor or Local Public Health Unit ([Waterloo Region Link](#)).

What can you expect? Generally your genital area will be checked out by a doctor or nurse. It is important to tell him or her if you have had anal or oral sex so the right area(s) can be checked for infection. A swab (cotton or sponge) will be taken from any possibly infected place...the cervix, urethra, anus, or throat. Women will get an internal pelvic exam. Sometimes a urine sample will be asked for. Some of this may be a bit uncomfortable, but not painful.

Treatment

Sometimes the results of tests will be available almost immediately. Backup tests may be made on the samples/swabs, at an outside laboratory.

Gonorrhoea is treated easily with an antibiotic, either by injection or an oral antibiotic. It is very important to finish all the antibiotic you are prescribed. If people stop taking an antibiotic when symptoms disappear but before the "course" of treatment is finished, the infection can fight its way back and you will be helping develop bacteria which can resist antibiotics! It is also very important to tell your doctor if you are allergic to antibiotics, or if you are (or might be) pregnant.

Do not have sex again until it has been OK'd by the doctor or clinic.

You must return for a check-up because some antibiotics don't work as well as we'd like; some bacteria are becoming "antibiotic resistant" and you may need to take a different antibiotic to be cured.