

Gonorrhea is an infection spread by bacteria. Also known as “the clap” or “the drip”, it affects both women and men. Men can get it in moist, warm areas such as the urethra, anus, mouth, throat, and eyes.

Gonorrhea

How is it spread?

Men get gonorrhea from sexual contact with someone who is infected. Anyone who has gonorrhea can spread it to others. Gonorrhea can be spread through oral, vaginal, and anal contact between:

- ▶ Men and women.
- ▶ Men and men.

Men can get or spread HIV more easily if they have gonorrhea.

What are signs of gonorrhea in men?

Some women and men can have gonorrhea without any signs. For men, signs include:

- ▶ Painful or burning urination.
- ▶ White, yellow or green discharge from penis.
- ▶ Testicular/scrotal pain.
- ▶ Anal discharge, pain/itching, bleeding or painful bowel movements.
- ▶ Fever, abdominal pain, rashes, and swelling or pain in joints over time.
- ▶ Sore throat.
- ▶ Red or itchy eyes.
- ▶ Eye discharge.

See your HCP to be tested if you have signs of gonorrhea.

Get tested for gonorrhea if your sex partner has it.

How do you know if you have gonorrhea?

The only way to know if you have gonorrhea is by a medical exam. Your health care provider (HCP) can examine you and test for it. Lab samples may be taken from the bladder, bowels, throat, urine, or eyes. Your HCP may ask to test you for other infections at the same time. See your HCP to be tested for gonorrhea if you:

- ▶ Have any sign of gonorrhea.
- ▶ Have new or multiple sex partners.
- ▶ Do not practice safe sex.
- ▶ Are having sex with someone who might be having sex with others.
- ▶ Are having sex with a partner who has a sexually transmitted disease (STD).
- ▶ Are exchanging sex for money or drugs.

How is it treated?

Gonorrhea can be treated and cured with antibiotics. Always finish antibiotic treatment, even if signs of gonorrhea go away. Do not have sex until after treatment and signs of it are gone. See your HCP if your signs do not go away after treatment.

What can happen if you have it for a long time?

Gonorrhea can lead to swelling in the testes but rarely results in infertility.

If you have gonorrhea:

- ▶ Always finish all antibiotic treatment.
- ▶ Wait seven days after finishing treatment before having sex.
- ▶ Do not have sex with someone who has gonorrhea or has not finished treatment (to prevent re-infection).
- ▶ Tell current and recent sex partners of the infection so they can get checked.
- ▶ Know that it can raise the risk of getting and spreading HIV.
- ▶ People with gonorrhea should be tested for other STDs.

Tell current and recent sex partners of the infection.

How can you avoid gonorrhea?

- ▶ Avoid sexual contact.
- ▶ Have safer sex:
 - Reduce the number of sexual partners.
 - Condoms, when used correctly, can reduce the risk of getting gonorrhea. Each time you have sex use a condom (male or female type):
 - During vaginal sex.
 - During anal sex.
 - During oral sex.
 - Have sex with only one partner who does not have sex with others and does not have gonorrhea.



For more information, see *Safer Sex* on page 71

Learn more:

Veterans Health Library:

http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.org/Encyclopedia/142,85087_VA

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

Gonorrhea - CDC Fact Sheet

www.cdc.gov/std/gonorrhea/stdfact-gonorrhea.htm

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID/NIH):

Gonorrhea

www.niaid.nih.gov/topics/gonorrhea/Pages/default.aspx

U.S. National Library of Medicine:

Gonorrhea

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/gonorrhea.html