

Gonorrhoea - Facts

What is Gonorrhoea?

Gonorrhoea is the second most common bacterial sexually transmitted infection in (STI) the UK with the latest Health Protection Agency data showing an annual increase in the number of Gonorrhoea cases by 25% (16,835 to 20,965). It is caused by bacteria called Neisseria Gonorrhoea that are passed on through unprotected vaginal sex, anal sex or oral sex and through sharing sex toys. The bacteria live in the cells of the urethra, rectum, cervix and sometimes the eyes and throat.

Approximately 50 % (half of women) and 10% (one in ten) of men show no symptoms of the disease after infection.

What are the symptoms of gonorrhoea?

Symptoms typically appear 1 week after infection, however, some patients have no symptoms at all until months later.

For women:

- Heavier or irregular periods
- An unusual vaginal discharge
- Lower abdominal pain
- Feeling of burning while urinating

For men:

- Yellow/green discharge
- Painful testicles or

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- Feeling of burning while urinating

Infection in the rectum may cause discharge and discomfort.

Infection in the throat rarely shows symptoms.

Infection in the eyes can cause pain redness, irritation and discharge.

How is Gonorrhoea diagnosed?

Gonorrhoea is diagnosed from a urine sample or a swab taken from the vagina, anus, urethra or throat. It is best tested 14 days after having unprotected sexual intercourse. This test is available at all Nuffield Health Wellbeing Centres.

Why should Gonorrhoea be treated?

Like chlamydia, gonorrhoea affects the female reproductive system and can lead to infertility. During pregnancy, there is an increased risk of miscarriage and premature delivery. The infection can be passed to the baby during childbirth causing eye infections. In men, the infection can cause painful inflammation of the testicles and foreskin. It has also been linked to an increased risk of prostate cancer later in life. Having untreated gonorrhoea may make it easier for you to catch HIV (AIDS).

How is Gonorrhoea treated?

Gonorrhoea is treated with antibiotics. It is important to complete the course of antibiotics and avoid sexual activity with your partner until both of you have been successfully treated. Repeat testing is necessary in some cases to ensure that the treatment was successful.

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Do I have to tell my partner?

It is important to notify your sexual partners to protect them against the possible complications of an untreated gonorrhoea infection. A trained Sexual Health Adviser at your local sexual health (or Genito-Urinary Medicine or GUM) clinic can help you identify and contact your sexual partners.

If you would like to book a Gonorrhoea test or consultation simply call our dedicated client services team on 0333 920 1607 or email sexualhealth@nuffieldhealth.com