

What is Gonorrhoea?

- *Neisseria* Gonorrhoea is a sexually transmitted bacterial infection.
- In males it infects the urethra (tube inside the penis) and in women it infects the urethra and cervix (neck of the womb).
- It can also infect the rectum and sometimes the eyes and throat.

How does someone get Gonorrhoea?

- Gonorrhoea is spread through contact with genital fluids from the penis and vagina.
- If you have vaginal sex, anal sex or oral sex without a condom you may become infected.
- Other sexual practices such as mutual masturbation or fingering may also result in the spread of infection.
- Gonorrhoea can be passed from mother to baby during birth. The baby may develop eye or joint infection as a result.

What are the symptoms?

- **Symptoms for Men can include:**
 - Thick, yellow, white or clear discharge (fluid) from the penis
 - Pain or discomfort passing urine
 - Redness around the opening of the penis
 - Anal discharge and discomfort
 - The infection can spread to the testicles (balls) causing pain and swelling.
- Men are more likely to have symptoms and these usually occur within 2-10 days after infection.
- Some men may not have any signs or symptoms, especially those with anal or throat gonorrhoea,
- **Symptoms for Women can include:**
 - Unusual vaginal discharge
 - Irregular bleeding
 - Discomfort passing urine
 - Pelvic pain, especially during intercourse.
- Most women do not have any signs or symptoms.
- If left untreated, gonorrhoea can spread to the uterus and tubes causing pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), a condition that may cause infertility or ectopic pregnancies (where the pregnancy develops in the fallopian tubes instead of the uterus). This can lead to chronic pelvic pain.
- **Both** men and women can have infection with gonorrhoea in the rectum if they have anal sex. This may cause rectal discharge or discomfort, but often there are no symptoms.

How do I know if I have Gonorrhoea?

- The best way to find out if you have gonorrhoea is to have a sexual health check.
- This involves an examination and taking a swab from the end of the penis in men and a swab from the vagina in women.
- Swabs can also be taken from the throat or rectum (bottom) if these areas have been involved in sexual contact.

Why Get Treated?

- Left untreated gonorrhoea can cause:
 - Infertility in women, ectopic pregnancy and pelvic pain in women
 - Epididymo-orchitis (infection in the testicles or “balls”) in men (rarely infertility)
 - Joint infection
 - Conjunctivitis
 - Septicaemia (Infection in the blood)
 - Increased vulnerability to HIV infection

How is Gonorrhoea treated?

- In most cases a single dose of the correct antibiotic reliably and rapidly cures gonorrhoea.
- Often chlamydia and gonorrhoea occur together, so you may be given treatment for both infections.

Does my partner need treatment?

- If you have had sex without a condom with your sexual partner(s) they are probably infected with gonorrhoea.
- They need a sexual health check and treatment even if they have no symptoms or a negative gonorrhoea test.

Important advice for someone with Gonorrhoea?

- **Finish all the antibiotics** – symptoms may resolve in a few days but the bacteria may not be gone.
- Do not have sex without a condom for at least 7 days after treatment because you can still pass the infection on in this time.
- Your partner(s) must also avoid sex without a condom for 7 days after their treatment as they may re-infect you.
- The antibiotics used to treat gonorrhoea generally do not affect the oral contraceptive pill, be sure to check with your nurse or doctor
- Book in for a 3 month check-up following treatment to ensure the infection has not come back.