

GONORRHOEA

What is Gonorrhoea?

Gonorrhoea is caused by the bacterium, *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, which can cause an infection of the urethra, cervix, anus, throat and eyes.

How is it spread?

Gonorrhoea is readily spread by vaginal, anal or oral sex without condoms.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Gonorrhoea most commonly infects the urethra in men and the urethra and cervix in women. It may also infect the anus and throat.

Men

Some men, especially those with anal or throat gonorrhoea, do not have any signs or symptoms. When symptoms occur they usually include:

- Thick, yellow or white discharge from the penis
- Pain or discomfort passing urine
- Redness around the opening of the penis
- Anal discharge and discomfort
- Sore, dry throat

Women

Most women do not have any signs or symptoms. When symptoms occur they may include:

- Unusual vaginal discharge
- Irregular bleeding
- Discomfort passing urine
- Pelvic pain, especially during intercourse.

If left untreated, gonorrhoea can spread to the uterus and fallopian tubes causing Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), a condition that may lead to infertility.

How long until symptoms develop?

The majority of men develop symptoms within 1-3 days. If women develop symptoms, they seem to do so within 10 days.

How do you test for Gonorrhoea?

We test for gonorrhoea by taking a swab (a sample of secretions) from the urethra in men and the cervix in women. It can also be tested by taking a urine sample. Swabs may also be taken from the throat and anus. The tests can usually detect gonorrhoea within 2-4 days of coming into contact with the infection.

How is Gonorrhoea treated?

Gonorrhoea is easily and effectively treated with antibiotics. At MSHC we usually prescribe an injection called ceftriaxone and an oral antibiotic called Azithromycin.

How long does it take for the symptoms to go away after treatment?

The symptoms will usually start to ease within 24 hours. If you are still having problems after a week, go back and see your doctor.

When is it safe to have sex again?

To give the antibiotics time to work, you should use condoms or not have sex for one week after the antibiotic treatment.

Do I need further tests after I've been treated?

If ceftriaxone is given, no further testing is required. However, if oral antibiotics are used instead of ceftriaxone another test should be performed one week after your treatment is finished to make sure you have been effectively treated.

Should my sexual partners also be treated?

Yes. It is extremely important to tell all your sexual partners from the last three months that you have been diagnosed with gonorrhoea and ask them to be tested and treated. If you have difficulty telling your partners, we have letters you can anonymously send to them, or trained staff who can do this for you without telling anyone your name.

How do I avoid getting infected again?

Practicing safe sex by always wearing condoms for oral, vaginal and anal sex is the best way to prevent further infections. It is important to change condoms if having vaginal intercourse after having anal intercourse.

This fact sheet is designed to provide you with information on Gonorrhoea. It is not intended to replace the need for a consultation with your doctor. All clients are strongly advised to check with their doctor about any specific questions or concerns they may have. Every effort has been taken to ensure that the information in this pamphlet is correct at the time of printing.