

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT GONORRHEA

Where can I learn more?

Go to knowmystatus.org
to learn more about gonorrhea
testing and treatment.

Gonorrhea information from DSHS:
dshs.texas.gov/hivstd/info/gonorrhea

For STD testing locations
in Texas, call:
2-1-1



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Department of State
Health Services

For HIV/STD questions, call
737-255-4300

or visit
dshs.texas.gov/hivstd

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WHAT IS GONORRHEA?

Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) that affects millions of people every year. People get gonorrhea by having vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who has it. The disease can affect the sex organs as well as the mouth, throat, and eyes.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE GONORRHEA?

Some symptoms are:

- Pus from the penis, vagina, or anus
- Burning or pain when urinating
- Anal or rectal pain and itching
- Sore throat
- Bleeding between periods
- Pain in the lower belly or lower back (women)

Even if these symptoms go away on their own, you need to get checked at a doctor's office or an STD clinic.

Many people do not know they have gonorrhea because they do not have symptoms, but they can still pass the disease to others. The infection can cause permanent damage even when symptoms are not present.

SHOULD I GET TESTED FOR GONORRHEA?

The only way to know if you have gonorrhea is to get tested. The doctor may ask you to provide a urine sample or swab your cervix, penis, rectum, or throat. Getting tested and treated early is the key to avoiding serious health problems.

Get tested for gonorrhea if:

- You or your sex partner(s) have symptoms of gonorrhea.
- You have more than one sex partner you are at a higher risk for STDs.
- You had sex without a condom.
- You have another STD.
- Your partner got tested or treated for an STD.

When you get tested for gonorrhea, you should also get tested for HIV and other STDs.

YOU SHOULD GET TESTED FOR GONORRHEA ONCE A YEAR IF:

- You are a sexually active woman under age 25
- You are a woman age 25 or older with new or multiple sex partners
- You are a man who has sex with other men

WHAT HAPPENS IF GONORRHEA IS NOT TREATED?

Gonorrhea can be very harmful if it is not treated early. It can cause:

- The inability to get pregnant or have children
- Pelvic inflammatory disease, a painful infection of the sex organs (women)
- Painful swelling of the testicles (men)
- Rarely, heart problems and arthritis (painful swelling in the joints) can occur
- Transmission of gonorrhea from mothers to babies at birth even if the mother does not have symptoms
- Eye infections that can lead to blindness in babies born with gonorrhea

IS THERE A CURE FOR GONORRHEA?

Medication prescribed by a doctor can cure gonorrhea. Your sex partner(s) must also get treated or you could get infected again.

If you have gonorrhea or any other STD:

- Take all the medicine given to you and follow the doctor's directions.
- Call your doctor right away if the medicine gives you problems.
- Tell your sex partner(s) to get tested, or ask your doctor to tell him or her.
- Do not have sex until a doctor says you and your partner(s) are cured.
- Do not try to treat yourself.

It is hard to treat some gonorrhea because some strains are resistant to medication. If your symptoms continue for more than a few days after receiving treatment, you should return to your doctor to follow up.

HOW CAN YOU STAY HEALTHY?

The only sure way to avoid gonorrhea and other STDs is to not have sex. Vaginal, oral, and anal sex can pass the disease from one person to another.

- If you have sex, use a latex condom and put it on before having sex. When used the right way, condoms help keep you from getting gonorrhea and other STDs.
- If you do not use a condom, make sure:
 - You and your partner only have sex with each other, **AND**
 - Tests show you both do not have gonorrhea or other STDs.