



Gonorrhea Fact Sheet

What is Gonorrhea?

- Also called clap, drip, GC, or “getting burned”
- Caused by bacteria called Neisseria gonorrhea
- Infection that can spread and cause damage to other parts of the body

How is Gonorrhea transmitted?

- Vaginal intercourse, anal sex, and oral sex with an infected person
- Contact with infected discharges from the penis, vagina, or anus
- To the eyes if infected discharges are not washed off the hands
- From an infected mother to her baby during birth

What are symptoms of infection with Gonorrhea?

- May not have symptoms
- In women, yellow or white discharge from vagina, painful urination, painful intercourse, heavier and more painful periods, cramps, and pain in lower abdomen
- In men, yellow or white discharge, and painful and frequent urination
- Reddened, sore throat or white patches in the throat
- Rectal pain and blood or pus in bowel movements
- Unusual redness and burning in the eyes; may lead to blindness

What are other consequences of infection with Gonorrhea?

- Because most women and many men do not have symptoms with gonorrhea, the infection can spread and cause damage to the reproductive and urinary organs.
- Gonorrhea is a major cause of pelvic inflammatory infection (PID), a serious infection of the Fallopian tubes that may lead to infertility, or an inability to have children.
- Gonorrhea can cause men and women to be unable to produce children.
- If untreated, gonorrhea can spread and cause pain in the joints (arthritis), heart problems, skin infection, blindness, and death.
- An infected mother can pass gonorrhea to her baby during birth. The baby may have eye problems, including blindness, and pneumonia if not treated.
- Repeated re-infections from untreated partners can lead to serious consequences.

What is the treatment or cure for Gonorrhea?

- Cured with proper treatment to kill the bacteria, but re-infection can occur
- Taking antibiotics as prescribed
- Treatment of both sexual partners

How can Gonorrhea be avoided?

- Abstain from vaginal intercourse, oral sex, and anal sex with an infected person.
- Have intimate sexual contact with only one person who is not infected and is also faithful to that relationship—for life.
- Reduce risk of infection by using a latex or polyurethane condom correctly for all vaginal intercourse, oral sex, or anal sex.
- Treat both sex partners to avoid re-infection.

If you have questions about sexually transmitted infections, call, e-mail, or talk to...

- CDC INFO: 1-800-232-4636 (English and Spanish; available 24/7)
- Hearing impaired hotline: 1-888-232-6348
- CDC e-mail address: cdcinfo@cdc.gov
- Parent or other trusted adult
- Family physician
- Local public health department
- Local AIDS hotline

These websites will also provide accurate information:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <http://www.cdc.gov/>
- American Red Cross: <http://www.redcross.org/services/hss/hiv aids/>
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services: www.michigan.gov/mdhhs