

## Gonorrhea

### What is gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by infection with the *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* bacteria.

### How do people get gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is spread through sexual contact with the penis, vagina, mouth, or anus of an infected partner. Ejaculation (cum) does not have to occur for gonorrhea to be given or received. Gonorrhea can also be spread from mother to baby during childbirth, causing an infection in the baby's mouth or eyes. People who have had gonorrhea and received treatment may be infected again if they have sexual contact with a person infected with gonorrhea. Condoms and barriers are effective at preventing the spread of gonorrhea and should be used with every sexual activity.

### What are the symptoms of gonorrhea?

Often, people infected with gonorrhea don't show any symptoms. Both men and women may have a yellow or green discharge from their genitals and pain when urinating. Women may have bleeding between periods. If the infection is in the anus, people may experience anal discharge, soreness, itching, or bleeding. The infection also be in the throat, but people usually don't have symptoms.

### What are complications of gonorrhea?

Untreated gonorrhea can cause serious and permanent health problems in both women and men, including infertility. Gonorrhea can spread to the uterus and other upper reproductive organs in women causing pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), a serious infection. Gonorrhea can also spread into the blood and cause disseminated gonococcal infection (DGI), which can be life-threatening. Gonorrhea infection can also increase a person's risk of getting HIV if they are exposed to it.

### Who should be tested for gonorrhea?

- Sexual partners of people treated for gonorrhea
- Anyone experiencing symptoms of gonorrhea
- Sexually active people under age 25 should have yearly testing (may include older people with certain risk factors or be done more frequently for people with certain risk factors.)

### **Treatment for Gonorrhea: Azithromycin PLUS Ceftriaxone**

You are being given these medications because you or your partner tested positive for gonorrhea.

#### **Medication**

Azithromycin 1 gram (1000 milligrams); one-time dose

PLUS

Ceftriaxone 250 milligrams, intramuscular injection; one-time dose

#### **Possible side effects**

Azithromycin: Diarrhea, nausea, abdominal (stomach) pain, vomiting

- Take medication with a meal and plenty of fluids
- Call the clinic if you vomit within 30 minutes of taking the medication, you may need to restart the medication

Ceftriaxone: Pain or slight swelling at injection site

- Move the affected area as much as possible.
- Apply warm compress to the area for 20 minutes, 5 times a day for pain  
*Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room if you experience swelling of your face, lips, throat or difficulty breathing after taking these medications. This may be an allergic reaction.*

#### **Resuming sexual activity**

- Notify all partners from the last 2 months that you were treated for gonorrhea, and do not engage in sexual activity with untreated partners
- Sexual activity can resume 7 days from both you and your partner's treatment

#### **Follow-up testing**

All people testing positive for gonorrhea should return to clinic 3 months after treatment for retesting.

#### **Avoiding future infection**

Anyone treated for gonorrhea can become infected again if they have sex with an infected partner. Consistent condom and/or barrier use with every sexual act will help prevent someone from becoming infected.