

# GONORRHEA

## 101

Gonorrhea is a common sexually transmitted disease (STD). Most of the time it is completely curable.

### THE FACTS

Gonorrhea is a very common sexually transmitted disease (STD). It's a bacterial infection that can be passed on during unprotected vaginal, oral, and anal sex. People who have gonorrhea often show no symptoms, which is why many spread the infection to their partners without knowing it. The good news is that most cases of gonorrhea can be easily treated with antibiotics. But if someone with gonorrhea doesn't get treated, it can cause serious health consequences, like infertility (the inability to have children). It is so important to get tested, learn your status, and get treated if you're infected.

### DO I HAVE GONORRHEA?

As with other STDs, the only way to know if you have gonorrhea is to get tested. Getting tested is easy. To test you for gonorrhea, your healthcare provider will collect urine (pee) or a swab sample. STD tests should not hurt at all but if you do experience discomfort, tell your provider.

Fortunately, most forms of gonorrhea can be easily treated with antibiotics; however, some forms of drug-resistant (incurable) gonorrhea are showing up in the U.S. It is important to know that someone can become re-infected with gonorrhea.

### POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS

Although most will not have symptoms, if you do they may include:

- Abnormal discharge from the vagina, penis, or rectum
- Burning when you pee
- Pain or discomfort during sex
- Itching, pain, bleeding, or discharge from your rectum
- Painful bowel movements Women may also experience pain in the belly or back (sometimes with a fever) and bleeding after sex or between periods.

### WHAT DOESN'T WORK

- "Pulling out" before a man ejaculates into the vagina or anus
- Birth control (it only reduces the risk of pregnancy)
- Washing your genitals, peeing, or douching after sex

### HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

#### Get Educated

*For vaginal and anal sex:* Learn how to use latex condoms the right way and use them every time. They're the only way to prevent STDs during vaginal and anal sex.

*For oral sex:* Use condoms for oral sex on a penis and dental dams for oral sex on a vagina or anus.

*For fingering, hand jobs, and other intimate touching:* Wash your hands with soap and water after touching your partner's genitals before touching your own (and vice versa). To be extra safe, some people choose to use latex gloves. Find what works for you.

#### Get Tested

Getting tested with your partner and treating any infection will keep you safe from the negative consequences of gonorrhea.

#### Be Smart

Have sex with only one partner, who has been tested and is not infected, and who is only having sex with you.

#### Stay Clear

Avoid drinking alcohol and doing drugs before you have sex. It isn't easy to make good decisions when under the influence.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For additional information about gonorrhea visit:

- [www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org)
- [itsyoursexlife.com/gyt/know](http://itsyoursexlife.com/gyt/know)
- [www.weRnative.org](http://www.weRnative.org)
- [www.gbtchb.org](http://www.gbtchb.org)

