



# What You Need to Know Gonorrhea 101

## What is gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is a common sexually transmitted infection (STI) affecting people of all sexes. Gonorrhea can be cured with medication.

Left untreated, gonorrhea can cause permanent damage to the uterus and fallopian tubes and may lead to infertility in people with those organs. Sexually active people with these organs under the age of 25 years--or those older than 25 who have a new sexual partner, multiple partners, or a partner with an STI--should be tested for gonorrhea every year.

Treating gonorrhea is becoming more difficult due to the bacteria developing antimicrobial resistance over time.

## What are the symptoms of gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea can initially present with symptoms of discharge from the genitals and a burning sensation during urination. People with testicles may notice pain and/or swelling in one or more testes. Gonorrheal infection of the rectum can cause pain, itching, discharge, or bleeding from the area.

If left untreated, gonorrhea can cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) in people with a uterus. PID can result in irreversible damage to the uterus and fallopian tubes, leading to infertility and an increased risk of ectopic pregnancy--a potentially fatal pregnancy that occurs outside of the uterus.

Infants infected with gonorrhea during childbirth may get conjunctivitis (an eye infection) that can lead to blindness if left untreated. All babies delivered in the hospital receive antibiotic eye drops to reduce this risk.

## How can you catch gonorrhea?

You can get gonorrhea through vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who is infected.

Prior infection with gonorrhea does not protect you from getting gonorrhea again.

Gonorrhea can be spread to babies during childbirth. Pregnant people with gonorrhea should talk with their doctor.

## Is gonorrhea treatable/curable?

Gonorrhea can be cured with antibiotics. However, the bacteria has become resistant to treatment with many different drugs. Your doctor will likely prescribe two medications to cure gonorrhea.

Taking every dose of the antibiotics as prescribed is critical to ensure the infection is cured. Talk with your doctor if your symptoms do not go away within a few days after completing your antibiotic course.

It's important to abstain from sex for seven days following your last dose of antibiotics to prevent spreading gonorrhea to any sexual partners.

If you have gonorrhea, your doctor may be able to prescribe antibiotics for your sexual partner(s) without needing to see them.

Infants who get gonorrhea during childbirth can be cured with antibiotics.

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# Preventing gonorrhea transmission

Use of condoms and other barrier devices during vaginal, anal, and oral sex can help reduce spread of gonorrhea but do not completely eliminate the risk.

There is no vaccine against infection with gonorrhea.