

Auckland Sexual Health Service
Free phone 0800 739 432

What is Gonorrhoea?

- *Neisseria* Gonorrhoea is a sexually transmitted bacterial infection.
- In males it infects the urethra (tube inside the penis) and in women it infects the urethra and cervix (neck of the womb).
- It can also infect the rectum and sometimes the eyes and throat.

How does someone get Gonorrhoea?

- Gonorrhoea is transmitted through contact with genital fluids from the penis and vagina.
- If you have vaginal sex, anal sex or oral sex without a condom you may become infected.
- Other sexual practices such as mutual masturbation or fingering may also result in the spread of infection.
- Gonorrhoea can be passed from mother to baby during birth. The baby may develop eye or joint infection as a result.

What are the symptoms?

- **Symptoms for men can include:**
 - Thick, yellow or white discharge from the penis
 - Pain or discomfort passing urine
 - Redness around the opening of the penis.
 - Anal discharge and discomfort
 - The infection can spread to the testicles (balls) causing pain and swelling.
- Men are more likely to have symptoms and these usually occur within 2-10 days after infection.
- Some men, especially those with anal or throat gonorrhoea, may not have any signs or symptoms.
- Rarely, gonorrhoea may spread via the blood stream to cause severe joint pain and infect other internal organs and skin.
- **Symptoms for Women can include:**
 - Unusual vaginal discharge
 - Irregular bleeding.
 - Discomfort passing urine
 - Pelvic pain, especially during intercourse.
- Most women do not have any signs or symptoms.
- If left untreated, gonorrhoea can spread to the uterus and tubes causing pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), a condition that may cause infertility or ectopic pregnancies (where the pregnancy develops in the fallopian tubes instead of the uterus). This can lead to chronic pelvic pain.
- Both men and women can have infection with gonorrhoea in the rectum if they have anal sex. This may cause rectal discharge or discomfort, but often there are no symptoms.

How do I know if I have Gonorrhoea?

- The best way to find out if you have gonorrhoea is to have a sexual health check.
- This involves an examination and taking a swab from the end of the penis in men and a swab from the cervix (neck of the womb) in women.

How is Gonorrhoea treated?

- In most cases a single dose of the correct antibiotic reliably and rapidly cures gonorrhoea.
- Often chlamydia and gonorrhoea occur together, so you may be given treatment for both infections.

Does my partner need treatment?

- If you have had sex without a condom with your sexual partner(s) it is very likely that they are infected with gonorrhoea.
- It is important that they have a sexual health check and treatment for gonorrhoea even if they have no symptoms and even if they have a negative gonorrhoea test.

Important advice for someone with Gonorrhoea?

- Finish all the antibiotics – symptoms may resolve in a few days but the bacteria may not be gone.
- Sexual intercourse without a condom during treatment should be avoided for at least 7 days because the infection can still be transmitted during this time.
- If you receive single dose treatment you should avoid sex without a condom for 7 days after treatment and until 7 days after your partner has been treated.
- If you are using a combined oral contraceptive pill you need to use a condom for 14 days as antibiotics can affect the reliability of the pill. Ask your doctor or nurse if you are unsure.
- We recommend you have another sexual health check-up 3 months after you have completed treatment to make sure you have not been re-infected.