

*Gonorrhoea often has no symptoms. It is easy to cure, but if left untreated it can cause serious complications. Condoms are the best prevention.*

## Gonorrhoea

Last updated 25 March 2011

### What is gonorrhoea?

Gonorrhoea is a sexually transmitted infection caused by a bacterial which can infect the throat, anus, urethra (urine passage), cervix (neck of the womb) and eyes. Gonorrhoea is sometimes called 'gono' or 'the clap'.

### Are there any symptoms?

Usually there are no symptoms except in the urethra. People often have gonorrhoea and pass it on to others without knowing it. If symptoms do appear they usually develop 2 to 10 days after infection, and they affect men and women differently:

For **men**, symptoms can include:

- a discharge from the penis
- irritation or pain when urinating
- redness around the opening of the penis
- anal discharge or discomfort
- conjunctivitis and eye inflammation

For **women**, symptoms can include:

- an unusual vaginal discharge
- irregular vaginal bleeding
- pain when urinating
- pelvic pain, especially during sex
- anal discharge or discomfort
- conjunctivitis and eye inflammation

If gonorrhoea is not treated in women it can spread to the womb and fallopian tubes causing pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), a condition that can lead to infertility.

### How is it transmitted?

Gonorrhoea can be transmitted through anal, vaginal or oral sex.

Gonorrhoea can be transmitted even when there are no symptoms.

### How is it prevented?

Using condoms and water based lubricant can significantly reduce the risk of transmission of gonorrhoea and other sexually transmissible infections.

Do not have sex with anyone who has been diagnosed with gonorrhoea, even using a condom, until after treatment is completed.

Go for a regular sexually transmissible infection (STI) check-up to find infections before complications develop and to prevent transmission to others. Always use condoms.

### **How is it diagnosed?**

Gonorrhoea can be diagnosed by your doctor. Gonorrhoea is diagnosed by taking a swab (using a long cotton bud) from any place which may have become infected – the cervix, urethra, anus or throat – and testing it in a laboratory. A urine sample may also be used to check for infections in the urethra. These tests are not painful.

### **How is it treated?**

Gonorrhoea is easily cured with a single dose of antibiotics.

### **Telling partners**

If you have gonorrhoea it is important to tell your sexual partner/s so they can be tested and treated. Your doctor can help you decide who may be at risk and help you to contact them.

Gonorrhoea is a notifiable disease. This means that doctors and laboratory staff are legally required to tell NSW Health about new cases. This information is confidential and is used for public health planning.

The information in this fact sheet is general and you should see a doctor if you are worried about your health.

### **Contact**

NSW Sexual Health Infoline freecall **1800 451 624**.