

Urethritis is an inflammation of the male urethra. It is caused by different bacterial infections. Use condoms to significantly reduce the risk of urethritis.

Urethritis

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What is urethritis?

Urethritis is an inflammation of the male urethra (the tube in the penis that urine passes through). It can be caused by different bacterial infections.

The most common causes of urethritis are chlamydia, gonorrhoea and mycoplasma. Urethritis is sometimes called NGU or NSU:

- Non-gonococcal urethritis (NGU) is an infection in the urethra that is not caused by gonorrhoea.
- Non-specific urethritis (NSU) is an infection in the urethra that is not caused by either gonorrhoea, chlamydia or mycoplasma.

Are there any symptoms?

Not always. Even though urethritis is usually caused by chlamydia, gonorrhoea or mycoplasma, men can have any of these infections without having urethritis or any other symptoms.

Symptoms may include:

- an abnormal discharge from the urethra
- general discomfort or a burning sensation when urinating
- feeling the need to urinate frequently

Symptoms usually appear between one to three weeks after sex with an infected person.

How is it transmitted?

The bacteria that cause urethritis are transmitted during vaginal, oral or anal sex with an infected person.

How is it prevented?

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

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

How is it diagnosed?

A thin swab is taken from the end of the urethra and examined under a microscope. A urine sample to test for chlamydia and gonorrhoea is usually taken at the same time.

How is it treated?

NGU/NSU is usually treated with antibiotics. For the antibiotics to work you need to complete the course of treatment.

If NGU/NSU is not properly treated, it can lead to long-term irritation of the urethra and/or long-term pain in the testicles

Telling partners

If you have NGU or NSU, it is important to tell your sexual partner so they can also be tested and treated. Your doctor can help you decide who may be at risk and help you to contact them.

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**.