

A microscopic view of several spherical, yellowish-green bacteria with numerous thin, hair-like pili extending from their surfaces. The background is a dark, reddish-purple color.

SEXUAL HEALTH TESTING

Gonorrhea Information Sheet

What is Gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is a common sexually transmitted disease (STD) that is spread through sexual contact with the penis, vagina, mouth, or anus of an infected individual.

Gonorrhea can also be transmitted from a mother with an untreated cervical infection to her newborn during childbirth (1).

Gonorrhea is caused by infection with the bacterium *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*.

Symptoms of Gonorrhea

Males may exhibit symptoms of gonorrheal infection; however, most infected females remain asymptomatic, with an estimated 85-90% of infected males showing symptoms and only ~20% of infected females (2). In males, *N. gonorrhoeae* causes genitourinary infections resulting in dysuria, frequent urination, abnormal urethral discharges, and testicular pain and swelling (3). In symptomatic females, symptoms may be so mild that they are mistaken for a bladder or vaginal infection. Symptoms can include dysuria, abnormal vaginal discharge and endocervical bleeding. Rectal infections (in males and females) can lead to discharge from the rectum, itching, bleeding, or painful bowel movements, while pharyngeal infections are generally asymptomatic but may cause a sore throat (3).

Untreated gonorrheal infections in females can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), and PID-associated infertility, ectopic pregnancy, and chronic pelvic pain. Complications in males include epididymitis and prostatitis. Gonococcal bacteremia, pharyngitis, and arthritis may also occur.

Untreated gonorrhea during pregnancy increases the risk of miscarriage and inflammation of the lining of the uterus (4). Gonorrheal infections can be passed to newborns during delivery, increasing the risk of eye infections (which may lead to blindness) and sepsis (which can lead to meningitis). Gonorrheal infections can also facilitate the transmission of HIV infection (3).

Gonorrhea Information Sheet

Who is at risk of gonorrhea?

Any sexually active individual is at risk of gonorrheal infection, with an increased risk among younger individuals. Gonorrhoea is one of the most prevalent STDs in the United States, with 583,405 gonorrheal cases reported to the CDC in 2018 (5).

How is gonorrhoea diagnosed?

Modern nucleic acid amplification testing (NAAT) provides the most sensitivity and specificity for a gonorrhea diagnosis. These can be performed on vaginal swabs (either clinician- or patient-collected) or urine.

How is gonorrhoea treated?

Antibiotic treatment is effective for gonorrheal infections. However, repeat gonorrheal infections from sexual contact with an infected partner are common, increasing the risk of serious reproductive health complications. Antibiotics do not repair any permanent damage done by the disease.

How do I reduce my risk?

Abstaining from vaginal, anal, or oral sex is the only way to completely avoid sexually transmitted diseases, such as gonorrhea. Other ways to reduce the risk include being in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has tested negative for gonorrhea, and using latex condoms correctly.

References:

1. Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance, 2018. CDC. [Online] October 2019.
2. Gonorrhea Gonococcal Infection (clap, drip) . New York State Department of Health. [Online] November 2006.
3. Gonorrhea - Detailed Fact Sheet. CDC. [Online] November 2019.
4. Gonorrhea. American Sexual Health Association. [Online]
5. Sexually transmitted Disease Surveillance 2018, Gonorrhea. CDC. [Online] October 2019.

Where can I find more info?

Visit www.genetrackdiagnostics.com for full test information, including specimen collection requirements

CONTACT US:

Email: support@genetrackdiagnostics.com

Phone: 1-888-802-0703

NOTE:

This brochure is provided for general information purposes only. It is not intended to replace medical advice from a health professional.