



Unneed2know
sexually transmitted infections

STI Information Sheet Gonorrhoea

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Gonorrhoea



What is Gonorrhoea?

Gonorrhoea is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by bacteria called *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* or gonococcus. It used to be known as “the clap”

Anyone who’s sexually active can catch gonorrhoea, particularly people who change partners frequently or do not use a barrier method of contraception, such as a condom, when having sex.

Gonorrhoea is the second most common bacterial STI in the UK after chlamydia.

In 2019, more than 70,000 people were diagnosed with gonorrhoea in England, with most cases affecting gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men.



How do you get Gonorrhoea?

The bacteria that cause gonorrhoea are mainly found in discharge from the penis and in vaginal fluid. Gonorrhoea is easily passed between people through:

- Unprotected vaginal, oral or anal sex.
- Sharing vibrators or other sex toys that have not been washed or covered with a new condom each time they’re used.
- The bacteria can infect the entrance to the womb (cervix), the tube that passes urine out of the body (urethra), the rectum and, less commonly, the throat or eyes.
- The infection can also be passed from a pregnant woman to her baby. If you’re pregnant and may have gonorrhoea, it’s important to get tested and treated before your baby is born.
- Without treatment, gonorrhoea can cause permanent blindness in a new born baby.
- Gonorrhoea is not spread by kissing, hugging, swimming pools, toilet seats or sharing baths, towels, cups, plates or cutlery. The bacteria cannot survive outside the human body for long.

Symptoms

Typical symptoms of gonorrhoea include a thick green or yellow discharge from the vagina or penis, pain when peeing and, in women, bleeding between periods.

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Treatment



Gonorrhoea is usually treated with a single antibiotic injection (usually in the buttocks or thigh). With effective treatment, most of your symptoms should improve within a few days.

It's usually recommended you attend a follow-up appointment a week or 2 after treatment so another test can be carried out to see if you're clear of infection. You should avoid having sex until you have been told you no longer have the infection.

Previous successful treatment for gonorrhoea does not make you immune to catching it again.



Preventing Gonorrhoea

Gonorrhoea and other STIs can be successfully prevented by using appropriate contraception and taking other precautions, such as:

- ✓ Using male condoms or female condoms every time you have vaginal sex, or male condoms during anal sex.
- ✓ Using a condom to cover the penis or a latex or plastic square (dam) to cover the female genitals if you have oral sex.
- ✓ Not sharing sex toys, or washing them and covering them with a new condom before anyone else uses them.