



Durham Region Health Department **Facts about...**



Gonorrhoea

What is it?

Gonorrhoea (GC) is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by bacteria. Many people have no symptoms and are not aware they have this infection. In women, GC can cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), a serious infection of the uterus and fallopian tubes. PID increases the risk of an ectopic or tubal pregnancy and can lead to infertility. In men, GC can cause difficulty passing urine and lead to sterility. GC can also cause infection of the eyes, throat, rectum, joints, and blood.

Gonorrhoea is a reportable infection and must be reported to the Health Department.

How is it spread?

GC is spread by direct contact with sexual fluids of an infected person through oral, vaginal, or anal intercourse. A female with GC can pass the infection to her newborn at the time of birth. It is important to tell all sexual partners within the past 60 days that you are infected. They will need to be tested and, if necessary, receive treatment. If you prefer, a nurse from the Health Department can contact your partner(s). All information including your name will be kept confidential.

What do I look for?

Men may feel a burning or itching sensation when passing urine. They may also have discharge from the penis. Women often have no symptoms, however, may have pain while passing urine, abnormal vaginal discharge, vaginal irritation, pelvic pain, or abnormal vaginal bleeding.

How do you test for it?

A urine sample can be sent to the lab to test for GC. A swab from the penis, cervix, throat, or rectum may also be taken if needed.

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If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



How is it treated?

GC is treated with antibiotics. It is important that the antibiotics are taken as ordered, even if you no longer have symptoms, if not, the infection may not be cured. Inform your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding to ensure the medication is safe.

How can I protect myself?

- Take antibiotics as directed until finished
- You can have sex again 7 days after you and your partner(s) have finished treatment and no longer have symptoms
- Practice safe sex and always use a condom with lubricant when having oral, vaginal or anal sex
- It is recommended that you return to your health care provider 6 months after treatment for a repeat test

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