

How can you lower your risk of getting gonorrhea and/or passing it on to your partner(s)?

- Make informed decisions. Talk to your partner(s) about STIs and the use of safer sex tools.
- Use condoms on penises or dildos for vaginal or anal sex, use latex gloves for finger play and fisting, and use condoms/dams for oral sex to lower your chances of getting or transmitting gonorrhea.
- If you are sharing sex toys, be sure to disinfect them or put a new condom on them when a new person uses the toys.
- Get tested for gonorrhea and other STIs when you or your partner has a new sexual partner. Or, if you have new partners often, get STI testing every 3-6 months.
- If you test positive for gonorrhea, follow your clinician's instructions for treatment and follow-up.

For youth ages 13-29

Planned Parenthood Toronto Health Services

Offers drop-in and scheduled appointments
Call 416-961-0113 or visit www.ppt.on.ca

For youth ages 13-19

Teen Health Source

Offers anonymous and confidential sexual health information for teens by teens.
Text (647) 905-6455, call (416) 961-3200, email teenhealthsource@ppt.on.ca
Chat online and visit www.teenhealthsource.com

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STIs series

gonorrhea

What is gonorrhea?

- Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by a bacteria.
- It can affect the cervix (the opening to the uterus), penis*, rectum (inside your butt) and throat.

How do you get gonorrhea?

- Gonorrhea is found in certain bodily fluids of someone who has gonorrhea: semen (cum), vaginal* fluid and anal fluid.
- You can get gonorrhea from having unprotected vaginal, oral or anal sex with someone who already has it.
- You can get gonorrhea if you share sex toys with someone who already has it and you don't disinfect the toys or put a new condom on them each time a new person uses the toys.
- A pregnant person with gonorrhea can pass it on to their baby during vaginal delivery.

How do you know if you have gonorrhea?

- The only way to know you have gonorrhea is to get tested.
- Some people do not have any symptoms and may not know they have it. You can pass on gonorrhea even if you don't have any symptoms.

*We know that these aren't the words everyone uses for their bodies (eg. trans folks), and support you using the language that feels best for you.

- Most people with testicles** will get symptoms in the first week after getting the infection. Most people with cervixes** do not have symptoms or the symptoms may be mistaken for a bladder or vaginal infection.
- Symptoms can vary depending on where the infection is.

Possible Symptoms

Cervix:

- Painful urination (peeing)
- Bleeding between periods
- A change in vaginal discharge
- Pain during or after vaginal sex

Penis:

- Discharge from the penis that is thick and yellowish-green
- Painful urination
- Pain or swelling in the testicles (balls)

Anus:

- Pain or itching in the rectum (butt)
- Bleeding or discharge from the rectum
- Painful bowel movements (pooping)

Throat:

- Possible sore throat or swollen glands but usually no symptoms at all

Remember: The most common symptom of any gonorrhea infection is no symptoms at all

How can you get tested for gonorrhea?

- If you have a vagina, a clinician will do a vaginal exam and take a swab of your cervix or the inside of the vagina. At some clinics, you can be tested by peeing into a cup.
- A Pap test is not a gonorrhea or STI test.

** People with cervixes are usually designated female at birth while people with testicles are usually designated male at birth. People with testicles don't always identify as male and people with cervixes don't always identify as female.

- If you want to be tested for gonorrhea, ask specifically for a gonorrhea test. Do not assume you will be tested for gonorrhea, even if you ask to be tested "for everything" or "every STI".
- If you have a penis, you will be tested by peeing into a cup.
- To make sure your results are accurate, do not pee for 1-2 hours before doing the test.
- Gonorrhea in the throat or rectum is tested for by swabbing the area. A swab is like a long q-tip.
- A pregnant person can pass gonorrhea on to their baby during vaginal childbirth. If you are pregnant and have not been tested for gonorrhea, talk to your prenatal care provider.

What if you test positive for gonorrhea?

- Gonorrhea can be cured with antibiotics. These are most often given by an injection.
- Your sexual partners should also get tested and treated. If they don't, they can give gonorrhea to you again.
- It is important to have a follow-up test after being treated for gonorrhea to make sure the treatment worked. Talk to your clinician about being re-tested.
- To make sure you don't give gonorrhea to your sexual partners, wait for 7 days after you've taken all your medication to have sex again.
- It is important to treat gonorrhea. If left untreated, gonorrhea can lead to serious health problems. In people with cervixes, this includes Pelvic Inflammatory Disease which can lead to infertility, long-lasting pelvic pain and ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy that occurs outside the uterus). In people with testicles, untreated gonorrhea can reduce fertility and cause pain and swelling of the testicles.
- Gonorrhea is a reportable infection. This means that if you test positive for gonorrhea, you may be called by a public health nurse to get contact information for current and past sexual partners so that those people may be encouraged to get tested. Your name is not disclosed when a sexual partner is contacted.
- You can also contact current and past sexual partners yourself. If you wish to do so anonymously, you can use an email program called <https://letthemknow.org.au/>