

# Gonorrhea – CDC Fact Sheet



**Anyone who is sexually active can get gonorrhea. Gonorrhea can cause very serious complications when not treated, but can be cured with the right medication.**



## What is gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) that can infect both men and women. It can cause infections in the genitals, rectum, and throat. It is a very common infection, especially among young people ages 15-24 years.

## How is gonorrhea spread?

You can get gonorrhea by having anal, vaginal, or oral sex with someone who has gonorrhea.

A pregnant woman with gonorrhea can give the infection to her baby during childbirth.

## How can I reduce my risk of getting gonorrhea?

The only way to avoid STDs is to not have vaginal, anal, or oral sex.

If you are sexually active, you can do the following things to lower your chances of getting gonorrhea:

- Being in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has been tested and has negative STD test results;
- Using latex condoms and dental dams the right way every time you have sex.

## Am I at risk for gonorrhea?

Any sexually active person can get gonorrhea through unprotected anal, vaginal, or oral sex.

If you are sexually active, have an honest and open talk with your health care provider and ask whether you should be tested for gonorrhea or other STDs. If you are a sexually active man who is gay, bisexual, or who has sex with men, you should be tested for gonorrhea every year. If you are a sexually active women younger than 25 years or an older women with risk factors such as new or multiple sex partners, or a sex partner who has a sexually transmitted infection, you should be tested for gonorrhea every year.

## I'm pregnant. How does gonorrhea affect my baby?

If you are pregnant and have gonorrhea, you can give the infection to your baby during delivery. This can cause serious health problems for your baby. If you are pregnant, it is important that you talk to your health care provider so that you get the correct examination, testing, and treatment, as necessary. Treating gonorrhea as soon as possible will make health complications for your baby less likely.

## How do I know if I have gonorrhea?

Some men with gonorrhea may have no symptoms at all. However, men who do have symptoms, may have:

- A burning sensation when urinating;
- A white, yellow, or green discharge from the penis;
- Painful or swollen testicles (although this is less common).

Most women with gonorrhea do not have any symptoms. Even when a woman has symptoms, they are often mild and can be mistaken for

