

GONORRHEA

TO YOUR HEALTH - PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

10.4

DESCRIPTION

An infectious disease of the reproductive organs that is sexually transmitted. In males, it involves the urethra; in females, the urethra and reproductive system; and in both sexes the rectum, throat, and other body parts. It can affect persons of all ages who have sexual contact with infected persons.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Symptoms usually begin 2 to 5 days, or up to 30 days after being exposed. Females have few or no symptoms. Males usually have symptoms.
- Burning sensation when urinating.
- White to yellow-green discharge from the urethra.
- Rectal discomfort and discharge (sometimes)
- Sore throat (mild)
- Females may have abdominal cramps.
- Conjunctivitis (eye inflammation). This occurs when the person touches infected genitals and then the eyes.
- If the infection spreads to other body parts; joint pain, low fever, rash, headache, neck pain, and stiffness.

CAUSES

Infection from gonococcus bacteria that grow easily on delicate, moist tissue. The bacteria is transmitted sexually, through either vaginal, oral, or anal intercourse. It can be spread from mother to child during childbirth if the mother is infected at time of delivery.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Multiple sexual partners, whether heterosexual or homosexual.
- Having sex with an infected person.
- Infant who passes through the infected birth canal of the mother.
- Having unprotected sexual contact and activities.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Avoid sexual partners whose health practices and status are uncertain. Use a latex condom during sexual intercourse. It sometimes occurs simultaneously with other sexually transmitted infections.
- Abstinence

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Usually curable in 1 to 2 weeks with treatment.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Gonococcal eye infection. This may cause blindness in children.
- Blood poisoning (gonococcal septicemia).
- Infectious arthritis.
- Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID).
- Epididymitis which can lead to infertility in males.
- Heart inflammation or infection around the liver
- Infertility in women.

GENERAL MEASURES

Diagnostic tests may include blood studies; laboratory culture and microscopic analysis of the discharge from the reproductive organs, rectum or throat. Treatment is with antibiotic medication. Patient should be tested for other sexually transmitted infections. Wash hands frequently especially after urination and bowel movements. Don't touch eyes with hands. All sexual partners should be tested or treated.

MEDICATION

Antibiotics will be necessary to fight the infection. You may take non-prescription drugs, such as acetaminophen or aspirin, to reduce discomfort

ACTIVITY & DIET

Don't resume sexual activity until medication is completed and all partners have been tested or treated. Treatment failures and resistance to antibiotics rarely occur. No special diet.

NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF..

Symptoms don't improve with treatment of other symptoms occur.

Student Health Center



WWW.SIU.EDU/~SHC

This information is for educational purposes only. Consult your doctor for specific medical advice, diagnosis and treatment.

618-453-3311

Dial-A-Nurse is available after-hours until 10:30 p.m. during fall and spring semesters. In case of emergency dial 911.