



CALHOUN COUNTY

Public Health Department

190 E Michigan Ave
Battle Creek, MI 49014

calhouncountymi.gov/publichealth
269-969-6370

Fact Sheet

Gonorrhea

What is gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*. This bacterium can grow and multiply easily in the warm, moist areas of the reproductive tract, including the cervix, uterus, and fallopian tubes in women, and in the urethra in women and men. The bacterium can also grow in the mouth, throat, eyes, and anus.

In 2021, a total of 710,151 cases of gonorrhea were reported to the CDC, making it the second most common notifiable STD in the United States that year.

Who is at risk for gonorrhea?

Any sexually active person can be infected with gonorrhea. In the United States, the highest reported infection rates are among sexually active teenagers and young adults ages 15–24 years old. Additionally, infection rates were higher among non-Hispanic Black/African Americans and non-Hispanic persons of multiple races.

If you are a sexually active gay or bisexual male or a female younger than 25 years old, you should get tested for gonorrhea annually. Talk to your primary care provider to determine how often you should be tested based on personal risk factors.

How is gonorrhea spread?

People get gonorrhea by having sex with someone who has the disease. Having sex means vaginal, oral, or anal sex. Ejaculation does not have to occur for gonorrhea to be transmitted. Gonorrhea can also be spread from an untreated mother to her baby during childbirth.

People who have had gonorrhea and received treatment may get infected again if they have sexual contact with a person infected with gonorrhea.

What are the symptoms of gonorrhea?

In males, symptoms appear 1 to 14 days after infection, though they can take up to 30 days to appear.

Common symptoms of gonorrhea in males includes:

- Burning sensation when urinating
- A white, yellow, or green discharge from the penis
- Painful or swollen testicles

Most women who are infected with gonorrhea have no symptoms. Even when a woman has symptoms, they are often mild and can be mistaken for a bladder or vaginal infection.

Common symptoms of gonorrhea in females includes:

- Painful or burning sensation when urinating
- Increased vaginal discharge
- Vaginal bleeding between periods

Common symptoms of rectal infections for males and females include:

- Discharge
- Anal itching
- Soreness
- Bleeding
- Painful bowel movements

How is gonorrhea diagnosed?

Most of the time, a urine test can be used to test for gonorrhea. Additionally, healthcare providers may use swabs to collect samples from the throat, rectum, male urethra, and/or female cervix.

Anyone who is sexually active should discuss his or her risk factors with a health care provider and ask whether he or she should be tested for gonorrhea or other STDs. Anyone with unusual genital symptoms should see their health care provider. Anyone with a sex partner who has recently been diagnosed with an STD should see a health care provider.

What is the treatment for gonorrhea?

Antibiotics can successfully cure gonorrhea, but the incidence of drug-resistant strains is increasing in many areas of the world, including the United States. This is making it much more difficult to successfully treat gonorrhea.

It is important to take all of the medication prescribed to cure gonorrhea. Although medication will stop the infection, it will not repair any permanent damage done by the disease. People who have had gonorrhea and have been treated can get the disease again if they have sexual contact with persons infected with gonorrhea. If a person's symptoms continue even after receiving treatment, he or she should return to a doctor to be reevaluated.

How can gonorrhea be prevented?

- The only way to completely avoid STDs is to not have vaginal, anal, or oral sex.
- Being in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with a partner that has had a negative gonorrhea test.
- Use condoms correctly during every sexual encounter.

How do I get more information on gonorrhea?

Calhoun County Public Health Department

Phone: 269-969-6383

 www.facebook.com/CCPublicHealthDepartment/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Phone: 800-232-4636 (800-CDC-INFO)

Website: www.cdc.gov/std/Gonorrhea/

Spanish: www.cdc.gov/std/spanish/gonorrhea/stdfact-gonorrhea-s.htm

Gonorrhea

Updated 9/2023