

# GONORRHEA



Neisseria gonorrhoeae  
For the Health Care  
Professional

**Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by bacteria that can be cured with antibiotics.**

- **It is the second most commonly reported STI in Indiana.**
- Gonorrhea is a reportable disease and therefore must be reported to the local health department in the area where the patient lives.

**How is gonorrhea spread and who gets gonorrhea?**

- Gonorrhea is spread through oral, anal, and/or vaginal sex with a person who has a gonorrhea infection. (Hold for updated GC statistic)
- Gonorrhea can cause infection in the mucous membranes of the vagina, cervix, uterus, fallopian tubes, urethra, rectum, throat, and eyes.
- Many cases are asymptomatic.
- It is important for providers to take a thorough sexual history to determine how to test adequately for gonorrhea. Multisite/extragenital testing may be recommended. (For more on taking a sexual history, please visit [www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/sexualhistory.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/sexualhistory.pdf))
- Gonorrhea can also be spread through vertical transmission if pregnant person is infected at the time of delivery. Therefore, newborn infants may need to be treated prophylactically with an antibiotic ointment for the eyes.

**What are the signs and symptoms of gonorrhea?**



For people with vaginas:

- Many do not have symptoms
- If symptoms are present they can include dysuria, increased vaginal discharge, or spotting/bleeding between periods.

For people with penises:

- Many do not have symptoms.
- If symptoms do present they can include dysuria, a white/yellow/green discharge from the penis, or (less commonly) painful or swollen testicles.

Rectal infections:

- May be asymptomatic
- Symptoms can include rectal discharge, itching, bleeding, or painful bowel movements.

Pharyngeal infection:

- Can occur for people who engage in oral sex; however, gonorrhea is not thought to be an important cause of pharyngitis.

**Testing,  
treatment,  
and more  
on reverse!**



Get Tested IN





### What are the testing and treatment options?

First you will need to determine which sites are appropriate to test per sexual history.

- Offer/recommend extragenital testing if appropriate.
- Discuss with your laboratory and practice site to determine testing options and whether samples should be provider or patient collected.

The 2021 CDC STI Treatment Guidelines recommend Ceftriaxone 500 mg IM in a single dose for the treatment of uncomplicated gonorrhea. For complicated gonorrhea infection, please consult the current CDC STI Treatment Guidelines.

Encourage patients to be retested three months after treatment.

Some clinical circumstances require a test of cure (TOC) done at least 14 days after treatment; these include:

- Patients with pharyngeal infections
- Patients with anogenital gonorrhea NOT treated with CDC recommended regimens or CDC recommended alternative regimens
- Patients with suspected treatment failure (those with persistent symptoms >3-5 days after completing a CDC recommended treatment)
- Consult with your laboratory to determine how many days after treatment you should perform a TOC as remnants of the bacteria can create a false positive test result if performed too soon.

If left untreated, gonorrhea infections may result in Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), infertility, and pelvic/genital pain. In rare cases gonorrhea can spread to the blood or joints and can be life threatening.

### What is Partner Services?



Partner Services is a program within the Indiana Department of Health's HIV/STI/Viral Hepatitis division.

The primary purpose of Partner Services is to ensure the spread of STIs is contained.

Based on confidential conversations with patients, Partner Services contacts contacting the sexual partners of patients and ensures those partners are tested and/or treated.

Partner Services can also assist health care professionals in managing the treatment and/or further testing for the patient.

- Anyone who tests positive for a state reportable STI can receive Partner Services.
- Partner services can help identify additional testing/treatment information and the patient's previous history of STIs for healthcare providers.
- Partner Services assists patients with determining a plan to inform partner(s) to encourage correct testing and treatment.
- Partner Services staff also talk with patients about risks and risk reduction strategies.

For more information on how to discuss STIs with your patients please visit [cdc.gov/hiv/clinicians/screening/discussing-sexual-health.html](https://cdc.gov/hiv/clinicians/screening/discussing-sexual-health.html)