

Gonorrhoea

Fact Sheet

What is gonorrhoea?

Gonorrhoea is a sexually transmitted bacterial infection that can infect the throat, anus, genitals and eyes.

What are the symptoms?

Often there are no symptoms of gonorrhoea, so people can have gonorrhoea and spread it without knowing. When symptoms are present they usually develop 2-10 days after the infection is transmitted.

Symptoms can include:

- genital discharge
- pain on urination
- redness at the opening of the penis
- irregular vaginal bleeding
- pain in the testes (balls)
- lower abdominal pain
- pain during sex.

Infection of the anus (bottom) can cause anal pain and discharge. Infection of the eye can cause conjunctivitis and eye inflammation. Gonorrhoea infection of the throat rarely causes any symptoms.

If left untreated gonorrhoea can spread to the reproductive organs causing severe infection, this can lead to infertility and chronic pelvic pain.

How is gonorrhoea spread?

Gonorrhoea can be transmitted through any sexual activity including anal, vaginal and oral sex. Infection of the eye can occur if you touch your own or another person's genitals and then touch your eye without washing your hands.

It can also be passed on to a baby during childbirth and can cause infection of the eye and/or lung.

When should I have a test for gonorrhoea?

You should have a gonorrhoea test if:

- you have had unprotected sex (i.e. sex without a condom or dam)
- you have recently changed sexual partners
- you have more than one current sexual partner
- you have signs or symptoms of genital infection
- you have been diagnosed as having another STI, for example chlamydia, herpes or warts
- you have a sexual partner who has been diagnosed as having gonorrhoea or another STI
- you're under 30 and are sexually active.

Remember, most people with gonorrhoea don't know they have the infection.

You can ask your doctor about a gonorrhoea test even if you are seeing the doctor for something else.

If you are having a cervical screening test you can ask for a gonorrhoea test at the same time.

How is gonorrhoea tested?

Gonorrhoea is easily tested by a urine sample or a swab. The urine test is most accurate if it is collected at least 20 minutes after going to the toilet. A swab may be collected by a doctor or nurse during a cervical screening test or you can do the swab yourself.

How is gonorrhoea treated?

Gonorrhoea infection is treated with antibiotics.

It's important to avoid sexual intercourse for one week after treatment has started so that you don't pass on the infection or become reinfected yourself.

Your sexual partner/s of the last two months should be notified so they can also be tested and if necessary receive treatment. Your doctor or nurse can help you with this and there are websites where partner notification can be done anonymously.

You should not have sex with any recent partners until they have also been tested and treated for seven days.

Gonorrhoea is a notifiable STI. This means that the doctor who provided the test has a legal requirement to notify SA Health of the gonorrhoea infection. This information will be confidential.

You should follow up with your health worker at one week and two weeks after treatment to make sure the treatment has worked.

If you've tested positive for gonorrhoea it's a good idea to get a test for blood-borne viruses such as HIV and syphilis.

Prevention of gonorrhoea

- Use condoms/dental dams.
- Make sure semen, blood, vaginal or anal fluid are not passed between partners.
- Talk about any past infections with your sexual partner/s.
- Get tested regularly.

Where can I get tested?

- You can visit SHINE SA for further information, testing and treatment.
- Make an appointment with your local doctor, health care provider or Aboriginal Health Service.
- You can also contact Adelaide Sexual Health Centre:
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/adelaidesexualhealthcentre



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SHINE SA Appointments and Enquiries

Tel 8300 5300 **Online Bookings** www.shinesa.org.au
Clinic locations and times are available at www.shinesa.org.au

Sexual Healthline

Tel 1300 883 793 **Country callers (toll free)** 1800 188 171
Talk to a sexual health nurse about any sexual health issue.
Available 9am – 12.30pm, Monday – Friday

National Relay Service

www.relayservice.gov.au
133 677 (TTY/Voice) 1300 555 727 (Speak & Listen) 0423 677 767 (SMS Relay)