

## How can I prevent myself from getting gonorrhoea again?

Using condoms correctly and every time you have sex will reduce your risk of getting gonorrhoea. If you have a new partner, it is a good idea for both of you to have an STI test before any condomless sex.

## Gonorrhoea in pregnancy

If you are pregnant and you have gonorrhoea, it is important that you get it treated to prevent your baby getting the infection during childbirth. In newborn babies, gonorrhoea may cause redness of the eyes (conjunctivitis).

If you need to be treated while you're pregnant, your healthcare provider will make sure that the antibiotic prescribed is safe to take while you are pregnant.

If you need treatment while you're pregnant, you should make sure that you are re-tested after finishing your gonorrhoea treatment. This is to make sure that you have a negative gonorrhoea test before you give birth, ensuring that your baby will not be infected.

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# A guide to Gonorrhoea

## What is gonorrhoea?

Gonorrhoea is a curable bacterial infection caused by the bacteria *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*.

Gonorrhoea can infect the cervix (neck of womb), urethra (the tube through which you pass urine), the uterus (womb), fallopian tubes, ovaries, testicles, rectum (back passage), pharynx (throat) and sometimes the eyes.

## How common is gonorrhoea?

Gonorrhoea is the second most common bacterial sexually-transmitted infection (STI) in Ireland.

It is found most frequently in young people under the age of 25 and in gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men.

## How do I get gonorrhoea?

In most cases, gonorrhoea is passed from one person to another through:

- condomless sex (oral, vaginal, anal)
- rimming (mouth-to-anus contact)
- using unwashed sex toys
- to babies during delivery.

## You cannot get gonorrhoea by:

- hugging
- swimming pools or saunas
- toilet seats
- sharing cutlery or towels.

## What symptoms would I have with gonorrhoea?

Many people with gonorrhoea don't have symptoms. If they do have symptoms they can include:

### Men and people with a penis

- discharge or liquid from the tip of the penis
- burning pain when passing urine
- pain and swelling in one or both testicles.

### Women and people with a vagina

- bleeding after sex
- bleeding between periods
- change in normal vaginal discharge
- pain in passing urine
- pain in the abdomen (tummy)

Some people may have bowel symptoms such as diarrhoea, pain, mucus discharge or bleeding from the rectum (back passage).

## How can I be tested for gonorrhoea?

Gonorrhoea is diagnosed on a urine sample or a vaginal swab. Sometimes a swab is taken from the throat or the rectum.

## How is gonorrhoea treated?

Gonorrhoea can be treated with antibiotics.

## What about my partner?

If you have gonorrhoea, your partner(s) should be offered testing and may need to be treated.

## When can I have sex again?

You should avoid sex (even oral sex or sex with a condom) with anyone until after you have finished your treatment.

## What happens if my gonorrhoea is left untreated?

### Men and people with a penis:

Gonorrhoea can spread from the urethra (the tube through which you pass urine) to the testicles and cause pain (a condition called epididymo-orchitis). In some rare cases this affects fertility.

### Women and people with a vagina:

Gonorrhoea may spread internally from the cervix (neck of the womb) to the uterus (womb), and then up into the fallopian tubes and ovaries. This can lead to pelvic infection and pain – a condition called Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID).

PID can lead to scarring of the fallopian tubes and increase the risk of infertility and ectopic pregnancy (a pregnancy that occurs outside the womb, usually in one of the fallopian tubes).

### In everyone:

Rarely gonorrhoea can spread to the blood (septicaemia) or joints and lead to serious infection.