

# GONORRHEA

## PERSONAL HEALTH FACT SHEET

### *What is Gonorrhea?*

*Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted disease caused by the bacterium *Neisseria Gonorrhea*.*

### **How is Gonorrhea spread?**

Gonorrhea is spread during oral, anal or vaginal sex with someone who is infected. An infected person can also pass the bacteria from genital areas to other areas such as the mouth and eyes. An infected woman can pass gonorrhea to her newborn infant during delivery, and if left untreated, it can lead to blindness in the child. Most symptoms begin 2-10 days after exposure, however, many infected persons have no symptoms.

### **How is Gonorrhea treated?**

Gonorrhea can be treated with antibiotics. It is important to take all medications as prescribed. Persons with gonorrhea should also be tested for other sexually transmitted diseases. All sex partners need to be notified and treated and sexual contact should be avoided until after treatment has been completed by all contacts. Gonorrhea left untreated in women can cause infertility, pelvic inflammatory disease, internal abscesses and chronic pelvic pain. Men may experience epididymitis and infertility. In both men and women, gonorrhea can be spread to the joints and blood which can be life threatening. Gonorrhea in babies can cause blindness, joint or life threatening blood infections. Medication will stop the infection but will not undo the damage that occurred before treatment.

### **How can we prevent Gonorrhea?**

- Abstinence from sexual activity is the best form of prevention.
- A long-term, mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has been tested and known to be uninfected is another form of prevention.
- Limit your number of sex partners. The more people you have sex with, the greater the chances of getting an STD.
- If you choose to have sex, be prepared. Have a supply of latex condoms on hand and use a new condom everytime you have sex.

### **SYMPTOMS OF GONORRHEA**

#### Men may experience:

- burning with urination
- white, yellow, or green discharge from the penis
- painful or swollen testicles

#### Women may experience:

- painful or burning sensation with urination
- vaginal discharge
- vaginal bleeding between periods

(these symptoms can be mistaken for bladder or vaginal infections)

#### Symptoms of Rectal

#### Infections:

- anal itching
- soreness
- bleeding
- painful bowel movements

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