



Where can I get a gonorrhoea test?

You can be tested for gonorrhoea at a sexual health clinic or by your GP. To find your nearest sexual health clinic go to www.tht.org.uk or call THT Direct on 0845 12 21 200 or NHS Direct on 0845 4647.

Treatment

Gonorrhoea can be cured easily with antibiotics. Until the infection is treated and you have taken all the antibiotics, you should avoid sex as you can still pass it on to anyone you have sex with. Your sexual partners will also need to be treated regardless of whether they have symptoms or not. This is so that they don't give it back to you or pass it on to anybody else. You need to wait until your partner(s) have completed their treatment before starting to have sex with them again.

How can I reduce the risk of getting or passing on gonorrhoea?

The best thing to do is to use condoms for vaginal or anal sex. However there are still risks from other types of sex, eg oral sex. You can reduce the risk from oral sex by using condoms or dental dams.

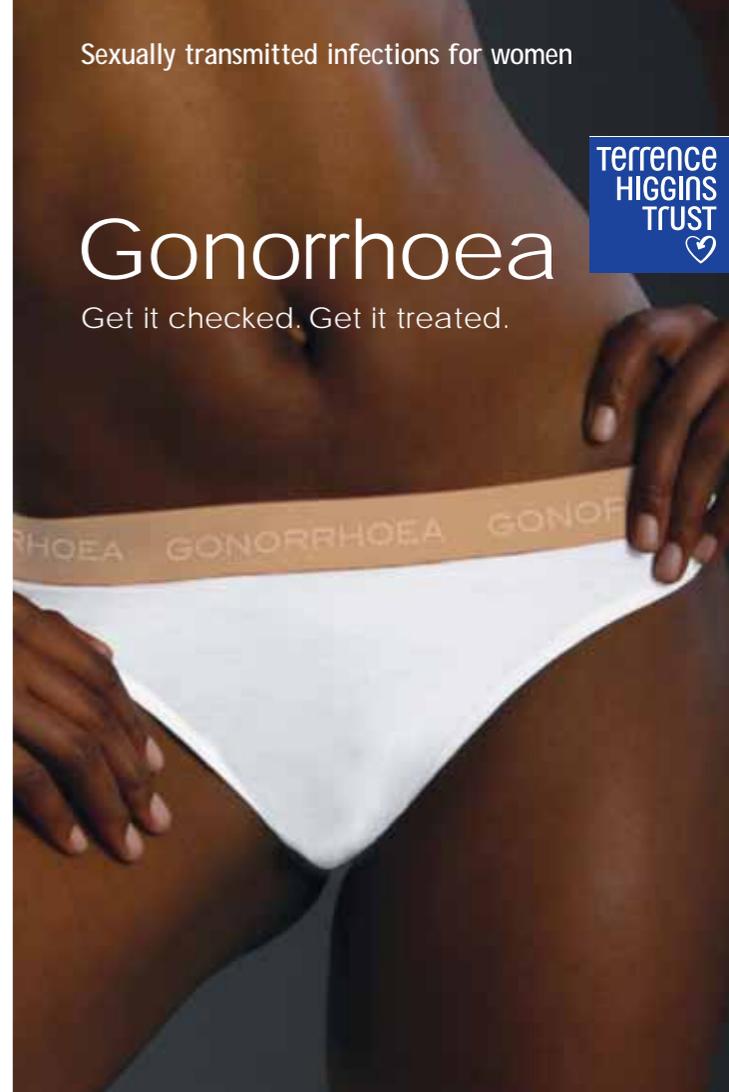
The more sexual partners you have, the more likely it is that you will get gonorrhoea. So it's a good idea to have regular check-ups at your GP or NHS sexual health clinic, even if you don't have any symptoms. Before you stop using condoms with any new partner it is advised that you both go for a sexual health check up.

Sexually transmitted infections for women



Gonorrhoea

Get it checked. Get it treated.



Supported by



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This leaflet on gonorrhoea is one of a series that has been designed to give you essential information on sexually transmitted infections (STIs). It's important that you know about STIs as they are more common than many people think, and some can cause serious health problems if they aren't diagnosed and treated.

Gonorrhoea is a very common sexually transmitted infection in the UK. Young men aged 20 to 24 and women aged 16 to 19 are most at risk, but people of all ages are, and can be, affected.

What is gonorrhoea?

Gonorrhoea is an infection caused by bacteria. These bacteria can live in a woman's vagina, throat, or rectum or in a man's throat, rectum or urethra (the tube inside a man's penis that carries urine and sperm out of his body).

Gonorrhoea can be passed on very easily.

Untreated gonorrhoea can spread to a woman's uterus and fallopian tubes and cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). This may lead to permanent damage, which may reduce your chances of getting pregnant and, in those that do get pregnant, increase your chances of having an ectopic pregnancy. An ectopic pregnancy is where the fertilised egg plants itself outside the uterus (usually in the fallopian tubes) and so it rarely develops into a live birth and may cause serious health problems for the mother. In rare cases it can be life threatening.

Damage to the uterus or fallopian tubes can also result in long term pelvic pain.

How is gonorrhoea transmitted?

You can get gonorrhoea if you have vaginal, anal or oral sex without a condom. You're also at risk of infection if you touch your vagina or anus after touching an infected vagina, penis or anus.

If you're pregnant you can pass it on to your baby during childbirth. You should speak to your doctor, midwife or obstetrician if you are concerned about any risks to your baby.

How would I know if I had gonorrhoea?

Women are less likely than men to show any symptoms of gonorrhoea, and it's common for them to have none at all. Any symptoms they do have are generally milder. So the chances are that you won't know if you have it, especially if the infection is in your anus or throat.

If you do get any symptoms they will usually appear within 10 days after you've become infected and may include:

- a change in your vaginal discharge
- a burning sensation when urinating
- bleeding between periods or after sex
- pelvic pain during sex
- discomfort, itching, discharge or bleeding from your rectum
- pain during bowel movements
- abdominal or pelvic pain
- lower back pain
- occasionally a sore throat.

The symptoms for men can include:

- unusual yellowish white liquid (discharge) from the penis
- a burning sensation when urinating
- burning or itching at the opening or down the inside of the penis
- discomfort, itching, discharge or bleeding from the rectum
- pain during bowel movements
- occasionally a sore throat.

Gonorrhoea can also cause conjunctivitis or arthritis but these are rare.

How is it diagnosed?

After looking for symptoms, the doctor or nurse will pass a small speculum into your vagina and take swabs from the neck of your womb or vagina. A swab may also be taken from just inside your anus, urethra and/or the back of your throat, depending on the type of sex you've had. This may be a little uncomfortable, but it doesn't usually hurt.

Some clinics will ask you to provide a urine sample instead of the swabs.