Protect yourself.

What about sex?

Not having sex is your best protection against gonorrhea and other STD. Having sex with only one uninfected partner who only has sex with you is also safe.

Other ways to protect yourself:

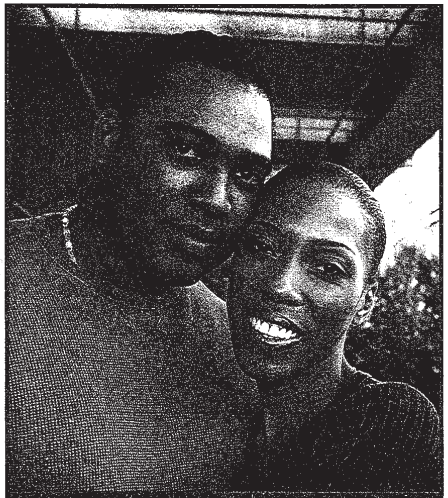
- **Use latex condoms** with a water-based lubricant every time you have sex. Both men and women should carry condoms.
- **Use plastic (polyurethane) condoms** if you're allergic to latex. These come in both male and female styles.
- **Get checked for gonorrhea and other STD** regularly. Ask your health care provider to help you decide how often and which tests you should have.
- **Don't have sex** with a person who you think may have an STD.
- **Don't use drugs or alcohol** when you might have sex. If you're high, you might forget to protect yourself.

If you have more than one sex partner, get an STD check any time you're concerned about risk, even if you don't have symptoms.

Gonorrhea can be cured.

See a health care provider.

- **If you have gonorrhea,** your provider will give you antibiotic pills or a single shot.
- **If you are given pills, take all the pills.** Gonorrhea may come back if you don't.
- **Wait to have sex.** Ask your provider how long after treatment you must wait.
- **Tell your sex partner(s).** Your partner must be treated, too. Otherwise he or she could give gonorrhea to someone else or back to you.



We don't have sex without a condom. It helps keep us safe from gonorrhea and other STD.

It's very important to treat gonorrhea right away.

To Learn More

CDC-INFO
1-800-232-4636

Professional models were used in all photos.
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Written by Katherine Forrest, MD.
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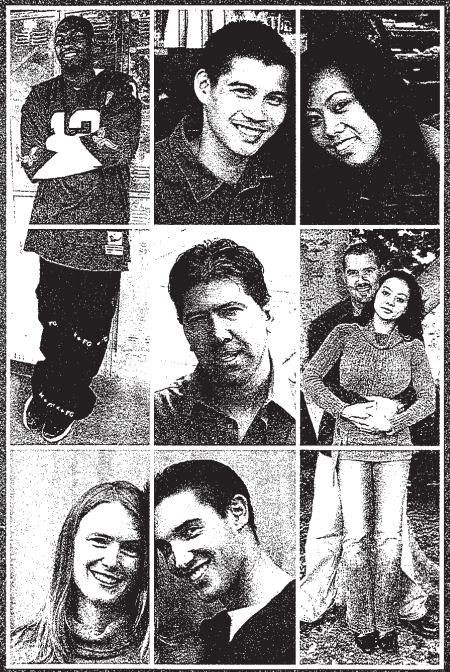
Title No. 186

STD Gonorrhea



What is gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is an STD (sexually transmitted disease).

It's spread from person to person during vaginal, anal or oral sex.

Other names for gonorrhea are GC, clap, the drip, or a dose.

Why is it serious?

You could pass it to someone else.

- **Many people don't know they have gonorrhea.** So they don't get treated. Then they pass gonorrhea to someone else during sex.
- **Gonorrhea can cause permanent damage** to the pelvic and sex organs.
- Gonorrhea can make both men and women unable to have children.
- Gonorrhea may also cause pain and swelling in the knees or other joints, small red blisters on the skin and heart problems.
- A pregnant woman with gonorrhea can give it to her baby during pregnancy or childbirth. The baby may have eye infections and pneumonia.

Most women and many men have no symptoms.

What are the symptoms?

You may not know you have it.

Most women and many men have no symptoms.
If they appear, symptoms show up 2 to 21 days after having sex.

Women may notice:

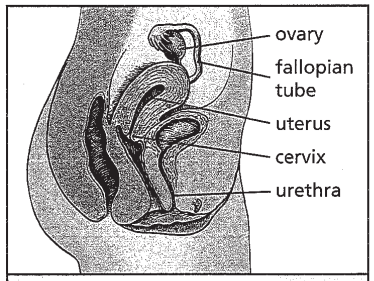
- Yellow or gray discharge from the vagina.
- Burning or pain when urinating (peeing).
- Urinating more often.
- Bleeding between periods or after sex.
- Heavier and more painful periods.
- Cramps or pain in lower abdomen (belly), sometimes with fever or nausea.

Men may notice:

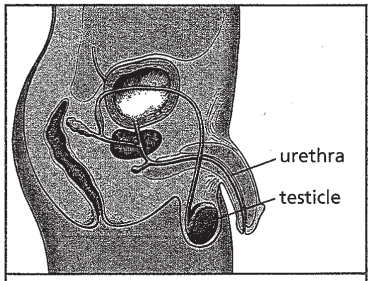
- Yellow or greenish drip from the penis, or stained underwear.
- Burning or pain when urinating (peeing).
- Urinating more often.
- Swollen, tender testicles.

Both men and women may have:

- A sore or red throat caused by gonorrhea in the throat from oral sex.
- Rectal pain and blood or pus in bowel movements caused by gonorrhea in the rectum from anal sex.



Women can have gonorrhea in the ovaries, fallopian tubes, uterus, cervix and urethra.



Men can have gonorrhea in the urethra and testicles.

Could I have it?

Get checked.

- **The only way to know for sure** if you have gonorrhea is to have a test.
- **You can get a test for gonorrhea** from your health care provider or at a clinic.

See your doctor if you have an unusual pain or discharge, even if it's mild.

I got checked. It's important.