

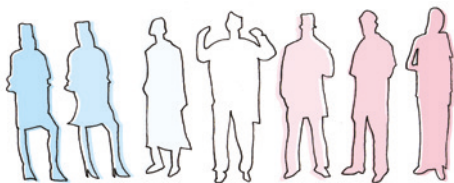
GONORRHOEA

WHAT IS IT?

Gonorrhoea and symptoms

Gonorrhoea can be totally symptom-free. A person could have gonorrhoea for a long time without knowing, which means there is a risk of passing on the gonorrhoea infection to others and developing complications. The bacterium that causes gonorrhoea can be found in the urethra, vagina, rectum and throat, and can sometimes cause an eye infection.

If there are symptoms, a discharge and pain when urinating are common. Vaginal discharge, rectal discharge or a sore throat are other potential symptoms. An untreated infection could lead to damage to the ovaries and epididymis (a small tube in the testicles). In that case, it could affect fertility (the potential to have children naturally, i.e. without medical assistance, could be reduced)



Gonorrhoea is on the increase again!

Gonorrhoea infections that cannot be treated with traditional antibiotics are becoming increasingly common. There is therefore every reason to take this sexually transmitted infection seriously!

Gonorrhoea is caused by a bacterium and is transmitted through unprotected sex. From having previously been at the same high level that chlamydia is at today – around 37,000 cases each year – the number of cases of gonorrhoea fell dramatically during the 1980s. However, the number of people who have contracted gonorrhoea has grown in recent years, and it is now an increasingly common sexually transmitted infection.

The biggest increase in gonorrhoea is among young people in the 15-29 age group. The majority are infected with gonorrhoea in Sweden. It is also frequently the case that people contract gonorrhoea through unprotected sex when out travelling, both within and outside Europe. In many parts of the world, gonorrhoea is a common sexually transmitted infection, and it is becoming increasingly resistant to antibiotics. The infection is thus becoming more and more difficult to treat, and there is a risk that it cannot be treated at all.



Common questions

How can I contract gonorrhoea?

Gonorrhoea is very infectious. The bacterium can exist in the urethra, vagina, rectum and throat, and as a result a person can be infected through vaginal, anal or oral sex. The bacterium can also be transferred to the eyes, via the fingers through masturbation and petting for example. You can also contract gonorrhoea if you share sex toys.

How do I know if I have gonorrhoea?

Get yourself tested! Depending on how you have had sex, a urine sample is taken and/or a sample from the vagina, anus or throat. If the bacterium is discovered, this will be supplemented by a culture test to see which antibiotics will work. A culture test and treatment should take place at a skin/venereology/STI clinic.

How is gonorrhoea treated?

Gonorrhoea is treated with antibiotics, although it could be resistant to certain antibiotics that are used. It cannot be seen from a urine sample if there is resistance. Consequently, a bacteria culture test is always taken before treatment begins. Testing takes place at a skin/venereology/STI clinic where specialist expertise is available. Control samples are always taken after two weeks to make sure the treatment has worked. Contact tracing, where you provide the names and contact details of your sex partners, is compulsory. This is done to ensure that those you have had sex with are examined and receive treatment if necessary. According to the Communicable Diseases Act, gonorrhoea is a disease that represents a danger to public health and as a result it carries the right to be tested and receive treatment free of charge. Untreated gonorrhoea can give rise to secondary diseases, such as inflammation of the epididymis and ovaries, which could lead to reduced fertility. Gonorrhoea could also cause inflammation of the eyes and joints.

How can I make sex safer?

Making sex safer could involve different things. Safe sex is about being able to choose how you want to have sex. Some people want sex in the form of intercourse. Others perhaps want to rub, grind or derive pleasure from

using their tongue and lips. It is mainly different forms of unprotected intercourse (vaginal, anal, oral), i.e. without a condom, vaginal condom or lip condom, that lead to a greater risk of sexually transmitted infections.

Gonorrhoea infects through contact with mucous membrane. Mucous membrane is found in the vagina, on the inner labia, around the opening of the urethra, on the head of the penis (glans), and on the foreskin. It is also found in the anus, mouth, eyes and throat. You should therefore avoid vaginal fluids and semen coming into direct contact with mucous membrane, and do not share sex toys. The greatest risk of infection is unprotected intercourse. Petting is obviously less risky, i.e. it is a safer form of sex. Any lubricants used must be silicone-based or water-based.

Many people are carriers of a sexually transmitted infection without displaying any symptoms. The only way of knowing for certain is to be tested. If you have sex with other people, you ought to go for regular tests. The risk of contracting a sexually transmitted infection is never zero as soon as another person is involved. In order to be able to make a conscious decision about your sex life, it could be good to think carefully about what you really want. How can you ensure that your sex life is the way you want it to be and by doing so avoid all the worry afterwards?

(Source: RFSU, Safer sex – with or without a condom, 2015)

Where can I be tested?

- Young persons' clinic (up to the age of 25)
- Health centre
- Antenatal Clinic
- Skin/venereology/STI clinic at a larger hospital
- Närhälsan Sexualmedicinskt centrum (Centre for Sexual Medicine) (over the age of 23)
- MUM (a clinic for young men) in Gothenburg
- Testing via the Internet service klamydia.se also includes a test for gonorrhoea

**THE TEST
IS FREE!**

This brochure is produced by

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Further information is available at

www.narhalsan.se/ksh

www.vgregion.se/smittskydd

www.1177.se

www.umo.se

www.youmo.se

www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se