

Description

Gonorrhea ("the clap" or "drip") is a bacterial infection caused by the *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* bacterium. Although it can be contracted through sexual intercourse as well as oral sex, infection is not limited to the sexual organs. The bacteria can infect the throat as well as the uterine tubes, vagina, urethra, rectum, epididymis and eyes. The most common occurrence of infection is a man's urethra and a woman's vagina.

Gonorrhea was once the most widespread STD in the United States. It is now the second most common STD behind Chlamydia; approximately 650,000 cases are reported annually. It is most prevalent in sexually active people between the ages of 20-24.

For more information:

Student Health & Wellness Center.....707-654-1170

Visit Our Website at <http://www.csum.edu/web/campus-life/student-center/student-health-center>

24-hr Nurse Advice Line (Med Call).....800-877-0027

American Social Health Association (ASHA)
National STD Hotline.....800-227-8922

*****Special Thanks to San Diego State University*****

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Gonorrhea



California Maritime Academy

A campus of the California State University



Health Watch Education Brochure

Gonorrhea

Transmission

Gonorrhea is most commonly transmitted by unprotected vaginal, oral, or anal sexual activity, or from mother to newborn during delivery. Gonococcal bacteria require a warm, moist environment such as the mucous membranes of the urinary tract, anus or vagina in both men and women. Outside of the body, the bacteria survive for only about one minute. In addition to the male and female genital organs, the eyes and the pharynx (throat area) may become infected by contact with infected secretions. It is possible to contract gonorrhea repeatedly, having been infected once does not ensure immunity against future exposure.

Symptoms

Symptoms usually appear within 14 days for men and 10 days for women.

Women:

- Many women have no symptoms
- Symptoms for women may include an abnormal vaginal discharge (change in texture and or odor), spotting between periods, abdominal pain (sometimes with fever and nausea), and burning on urination.
- Can affect the urethra, rectum, throat, tonsils, eyes, and reproductive organs. It most commonly affects the vagina.

Men:

- Some men have no symptoms.
- Symptoms include pain or burning during urination and a milky white or yellowish discharge from penis.
- Can affect the urethra, rectum, throat, tonsils, eyes, and reproductive organs. It most commonly affects the urethra.

Complications

If left untreated, gonorrhea can cause:

- Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) in women
- Infertility in both men (extremely rare) and women

Diagnosis

A culture is taken of the discharge with a swab from the vagina (in women). There is a urine test for men, however, occasionally a urethral swab is used.

Treatment

Since it is a bacteria, gonorrhea can be treated with antibiotics. It is important to receive treatment in the early stages of the disease to prevent more serious complications. It is very important for partners of infected persons to be tested and treated to prevent re-infection.

Dangers

- Since the majority of people have no symptoms and don't know they're infected, gonorrhea can spread and cause permanent damage to the fallopian tubes in women and to the epididymis (the tube which acts as a storage facility for sperm) in men. This scarring can affect fertility.
- Eye infection can result from contact with infected secretions.
- Gonorrhea is the causative agent in up to 40% of cases of pelvic inflammatory disease in women.

Prevention

- Abstaining from sexual activity is the best protection from all STDs.
- For people who choose to be sexually active, latex (dental dams/condoms) barriers, when used correctly and consistently provide the best protection.
- The poly urethane female condom offers more protection to female's labia region than the male condom.
- Spermicides and water based lubricants can be used to enhance sexual pleasure when using latex barriers.
- Spermicides/lubricants increase the effectiveness of condoms by lowering the chances of breakage.
- Lubricants also prevent tearing which can cause fluid transmission which can lead to HIV and other STD transmission.

