



**CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
DIVISION OF DISEASE CONTROL**

GONOCOCCAL INFECTION (CLAP, DRIP)

What is gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is an infection that is spread through sexual contact with another person. Gonorrhea is caused by a bacterium. There are over 650,000 new cases in the United States every year.

Who gets gonorrhea?

Anyone who has sex with someone infected with gonorrhea can become infected.

What are the symptoms of gonorrhea?

Men infected with gonorrhea may have burning while urinating and a yellowish white discharge from the penis.

Many women have no symptoms; some women may have a discharge from the vagina and possibly some burning while urinating.

Both men and women can get infections in the throat and rectum. Infections in the throat rarely cause symptoms; some people infected in the rectum may have pain with bowel movements and some discharge.

How is gonorrhea spread?

Gonorrhea is spread through sexual contact. This includes penis to vagina, penis to mouth, penis to rectum and mouth to vagina contact. Ejaculation is not necessary for gonorrhea to be passed.

Gonorrhea can also be spread from mother to child during birth.

How soon do symptoms appear?

In males, symptoms usually appear one to five days after infection but it can take as long as 10 days for symptoms to begin. Often, there are no symptoms for people infected with gonorrhea; 10 to 15 percent of men and about 80 percent of women may

have no symptoms. People with no symptoms are at risk for developing complications to gonorrhea. These people also spread this infection unknowingly.

For how long is a person able to spread gonorrhea?

From the time a person is infected with gonorrhea, he or she can spread the disease. A person can continue to spread the infection until treatment is completed.

How is gonorrhea diagnosed?

Gonorrhea is diagnosed with laboratory testing. Some laboratory tests use specimens (swabs) from the cervix, penis, rectum or throat; some laboratory tests use urine specimens.

What is the treatment for gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is treated with antibiotics (pills or shots). All strains of gonorrhea are curable but not all antibiotics treat gonorrhea. It is important to see a doctor to get the correct treatment.

What happens if gonorrhea goes untreated?

If a person is not treated for gonorrhea, there is a good chance complications will occur. Because women do not always have symptoms, gonorrhea frequently goes unnoticed for a long time, which can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). Symptoms of PID may include: pain during sex, pain in the lower back or pelvis, unusual vaginal discharge, nausea and fever.

PID can lead to sterility (not being able to have babies), ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy in the tubes), and chronic pelvic pain.

Men may suffer from swelling of the testicles and penis.

Both sexes may suffer from arthritis, skin problems and other organ infections caused by the spread of gonorrhea within the body.

How can gonorrhea be prevented?

The only sure way to prevent gonorrhea is to abstain from sex. If you choose to have sex, limit the number of sexual partners you have and use a condom each and every time you have sex.

If you are diagnosed with gonorrhea make sure all of your sex partners seek medical attention and are treated.