

in the groin too. The scrotum will then feel swollen. The semen duct (tube) may also be painful and swollen. Very occasionally, an epididymis inflammation can also lead to a testicle inflammation, causing pain and swelling. The symptoms of an inflammation of the prostate gland are a fever and difficulties passing urine, which may also be very painful.

Treatment

Gonorrhoea is easy to treat with antibiotics. The treatment usually consists of a single injection with antibiotics. It is also important that your sexual partner is treated.

Warning partners

All sexual partners in the six weeks before the symptoms began need to be warned and tested. If you didn't have any symptoms, then all partners from the past six months should be warned.

Further information

Further information about STIs is available on the Soa Aids Nederland (STI AIDS Netherlands) website. Soa Aids Nederland is a centre of expertise for HIV infection and other STIs. The www.soaaid.nl website gives detailed information on HIV and other STIs. Young people can visit the Dutch information site www.sense.info.

For answers to your questions on STIs, call the AIDS STI Infoline

0900-204 204 0 (10 cents per minute)
Mon – Wed 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Thurs and Fri 2 – 8 p.m.
or send an e-mail to: infolijn@soaaid.nl

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Gonorrhoea



SOAIDS

Gonorrhoea is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by gonococcus bacteria. These bacteria can live in the mucous membrane (skin) of the vagina, penis, anus, throat or eyes. Both men and women can catch a gonorrhoea infection of the urethra (where the urine comes out) by having unprotected sex – without a condom. Women can also become infected in the vagina. Oral sex (licking or sucking) may lead to an infection in the throat. An infection in the anus is caused by unprotected anal sex. Gonorrhoea is very infectious and can be passed on without there being any penetrative sex. Direct contact between the mucous membrane of the genitals is enough to pass on an infection. Gonorrhoea is easy to treat with antibiotics.

In men and women

In the anus: If the gonorrhoea infection is in the anus, there are not usually any obvious symptoms. Sometimes there may be some irritation in the anus and some slimy or pus-like discharge in the faeces (stools).

In the throat: An infection in the throat will often go unnoticed. Occasionally, it may lead to an inflammation of the throat, with a fever and swollen glands in the neck.

In the bloodstream: In both men and women, the bacteria occasionally reach the bloodstream. They may then cause inflammations in other parts of the body, such as joints.

Possible complications of gonorrhoea

In women: If gonorrhoea is left untreated, it can spread via the uterus to the fallopian tubes. The tubes become inflamed, and the inflammation can spread to the abdomen. An inflammation of the fallopian tubes may cause a fever and intense lower abdominal pain. If the proper treatment (antibiotics and bed rest) is given quickly, an inflammation of the fallopian tubes will be completely cured. However, the inflammation may cause scarring and adhesions in the fallopian tubes. This can leave blockages, which could then cause infertility or an ectopic pregnancy (outside the uterus). A pregnant woman can pass gonorrhoea on to her baby during childbirth. The baby's eyes may come into contact with the bacteria in the birth canal. Treatment during pregnancy prevents the baby becoming infected.

In men: In men, the inflammation may also spread, but this doesn't happen as often as in women. The bacteria can go via the vas deferens (sperm tubes) to the prostate gland and the epididymis (in the testicle). This sometimes leads to an inflammation of the prostate or epididymis. An epididymis inflammation can cause intense pain in the scrotum, and sometimes pain

Symptoms

In women: Women often have no obvious signs of gonorrhoea. If there are symptoms, the most common one is an increase in vaginal discharge. The discharge may smell unpleasant and have a different colour (pus-like). Sometimes there is some vaginal bleeding between periods. Passing urine could be painful if the urethra is inflamed.

In men: Men do usually have symptoms of gonorrhoea. The first signs appear between several days and several weeks after becoming infected. This could be a pus-like yellowish/greenish discharge from the urethra (urine tube). There might be quite a lot of it. If the urethra is inflamed, there will also be a burning or unpleasant sensation when passing urine. Because of these symptoms, gonorrhoea is sometimes known as the 'clap'. Occasionally there are no symptoms at all, but even then gonorrhoea is still infectious for others.