

## 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:

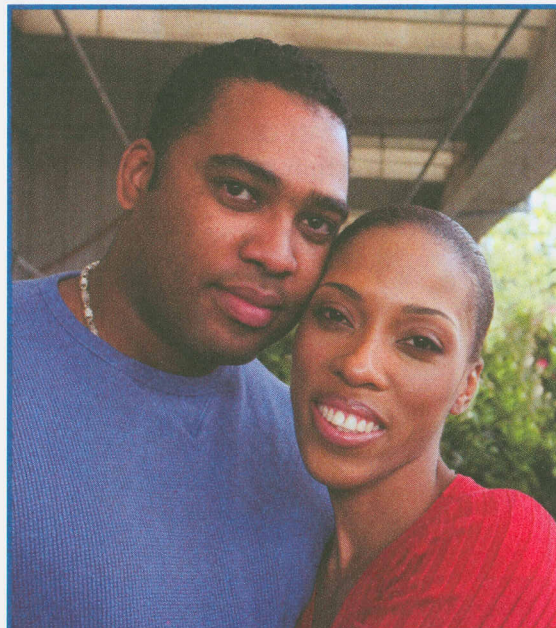
- **Use latex condoms** with a water-based lubricant every time you have sex. Both men and women should carry condoms.
- **Use plastic (polyurethane) condoms** if you're allergic to latex. These come in both male and female styles.
- **Get checked for gonorrhea and other STD** regularly. Ask your health 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.

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**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.**

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**It's very important to treat gonorrhea right away.**  
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### To Learn More

**CDC-INFO**

1-800-232-4636

Professional models were used in all photos.

This brochure is not intended as a substitute for your health professional's opinion or care.

Written by Katherine Forrest, MD.

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Available in Spanish

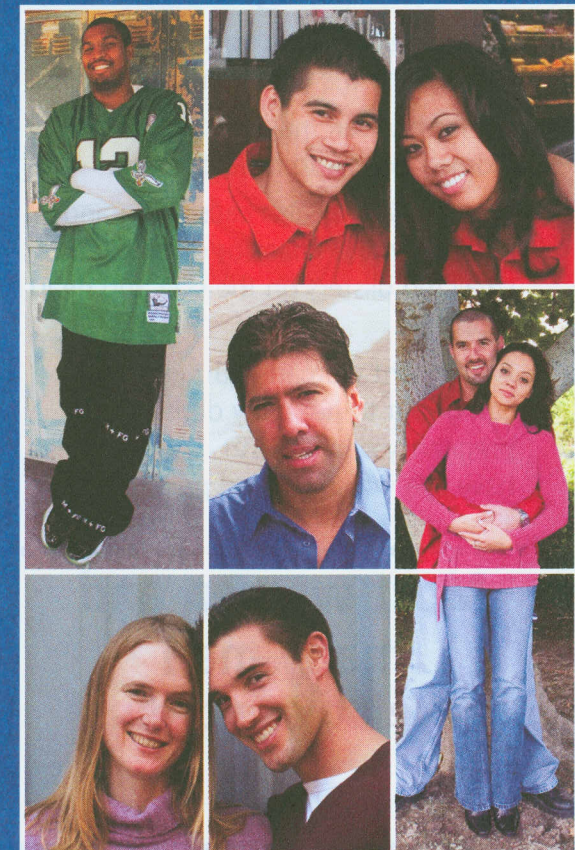
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Title No. 186

# 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.

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**Most women and many men have no symptoms.**

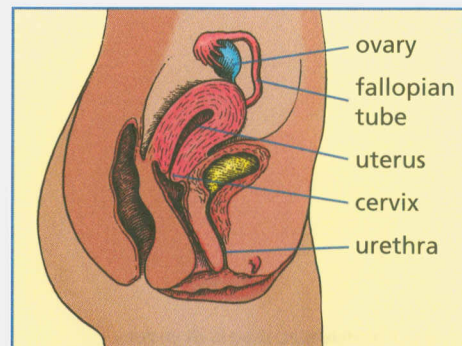
## What are the symptoms?

**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.



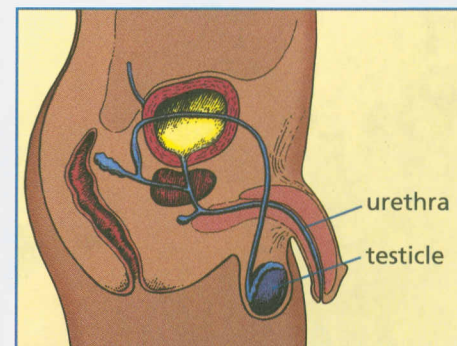
Women can have gonorrhea in the ovaries, fallopian tubes, uterus, cervix and urethra.

### 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.



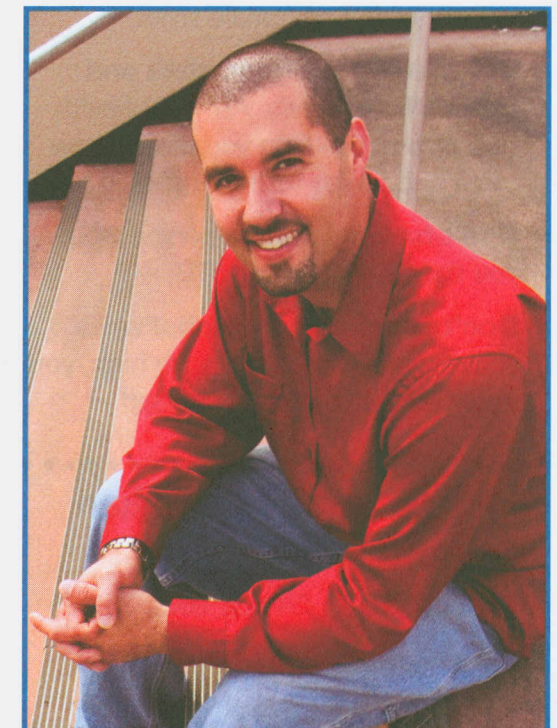
Men can have gonorrhea in the urethra and testicles.

## 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.

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



**I got checked. It's important.**