

## **Gonorrhoea: patient information (21/10/2016)**

*County Medical Officers' infection prevention sheet.*

### **Why have you been given this information?**

You have been or are suspected of having been infected with gonorrhoea. This sheet provides information about gonorrhoea, how it can be treated and what you need to do.

### **What is gonorrhoea?**

Gonorrhoea is a bacterium that is usually found in the mucous membranes in the urethra, vagina and rectum.

### **How do you contract gonorrhoea?**

Gonorrhoea is usually spread through unprotected sex, either vaginal sex or anal sex. Sometimes it is transmitted through oral sex. It can also be spread via heavy petting\* and sex toys.

Gonorrhoea does **not** spread through clothes, towels or on toilet surfaces because the bacteria cannot survive outside of the body. You can catch gonorrhoea more than once.

\*heavy petting = "touching", stimulating another person sexually without intercourse, mutual masturbation.

### **Can you tell if you have gonorrhoea?**

Some people do not have any symptoms, so they don't notice they have the infection.

For some people, it hurts to urinate. Some people may have a sore throat as that is where the bacteria are.

Women may have a yellowish vaginal discharge and/or pain in their lower abdomen. Men may have a discharge from their urethra and have pain in their testicles. If you have had anal sex, you may have discharge from your rectum. Even if you do not have any symptoms, gonorrhoea is highly infectious.

### **Is gonorrhoea dangerous?**

Without treatment, women's fallopian tubes may become damaged, which can make it difficult to conceive or result in a pregnancy developing outside of the womb (ectopic pregnancy). Men can develop infection in the epididymis (the tube that transports sperm from the testicles). Gonorrhoea can also lead to eye infections and occasionally inflammation in the larger joints.

### **How do you treat gonorrhoea?**

Gonorrhoea can be cured with antibiotics (injection or tablets). If you take the medicine as instructed and follow the advice you have been given, the infection will clear up. Treatment is free.

You **must** return to the clinic if you are given a follow-up appointment. A new test may also be needed to make sure that the infection has gone.

When you have gonorrhoea, you **must not risk infecting other people**. The safest way to do this is to not have intercourse or any other form of sex until the doctor has told you that you are free of gonorrhoea. If you do have sex, you **must** tell your sexual partner that you have gonorrhoea and you **must** use protection (condom/femidom).

### **Contact tracing – what does this mean?**

It is very important that people with gonorrhoea are found so they can receive treatment. This is partly to reduce the risk of complications (see above) and partly to prevent the

infection from spreading to others.

If you are diagnosed with gonorrhoea, you must tell a contact tracing officer the names of the people you have had sex/intercourse with – sometimes the names of people you had sex with up to one year ago.

Anything you tell the contact tracing officer is confidential. The people you name will not be told who you are. They will only be told that they must get tested.

### **Gonorrhoea is covered by the Swedish Communicable Diseases Act – what does this mean?**

There are rules of conduct in the Communicable Diseases Act to stop the spread of infections such as gonorrhoea to others. If you have or are suspected of having gonorrhoea, you **must follow these procedures** from your doctor:

- You must return for a follow-up appointment if the doctor tells you to.
- You must tell anyone you have sex with that you have/may have gonorrhoea.
- You must use barrier protection if you have sex before your treatment/testing has been completed.

If you have been given a rule of conduct which you think is wrong, you can contact the County Medical Officer in your county.

### **Would you like to know more?**

More information about gonorrhoea can be found on

[www.1177.se](http://www.1177.se)

[www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se](http://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se)

[www.umo.se](http://www.umo.se) (youth guidance centres online)