



What Is Gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea (or commonly known as “the clap”) is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by a bacteria.

Gonorrhea is transmitted through unprotected vaginal, oral or anal sex with a person who has gonorrhea. Gonorrhea can also be passed from a mother to her unborn baby and cause blindness in the baby.

Gonorrhea can be cured with an antibiotic treatment, however an increase in antibiotic-resistant strains is complicating treatment.

If left untreated, gonorrhea can cause sterility, joint problems and heart problems. Infected persons are also more susceptible to HIV.

In women, Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) can occur. PID is a painful lower abdominal infection that can lead to sterility.

Gonorrhea in Canada

- After reaching an all-time low in 1997, gonorrhea rates began to climb in Canada.
- In 1997, there were 4500 cases reported in Canada. This figure doubled to 9000 cases by 2005.
- Gonorrhea predominantly affects males 20 to 29 years old and females 15 to 24 years old.
- The rise in reported rates has been evident in both sexes since 1997, although it has been greater among males (106%) than females (76%).

Gonorrhea in Alberta and Calgary

- In 2000, there were 588 reported cases of gonorrhea in Alberta. This rate nearly tripled to 1515 cases in 2005.
- In 2005, 62% of gonorrhea cases in Alberta were among men. Of the cases reported among women, 40% occurred in the 15 – 19 age group.
- In 2005, 50% of all cases in Alberta were in individuals under the age of 25; 70% were under the age of 30.
- In 2000, there were 152 reported cases of gonorrhea in Calgary. This jumped to 387 cases in 2005, and over 460 cases in the first 3 quarters of 2006.
- In 2006 in the Calgary region, cases of gonorrhea appeared mainly in men over 30 who had engaged in sex with other men.

Symptoms

Symptoms usually appear 2 to 9 days after unprotected sexual contact with an infected person. However, many people have **no** symptoms. The only reliable way to know if you have gonorrhea is to be tested.

Women:

- Thick yellowish vaginal discharge.
- Abnormal vaginal bleeding.
- Burning/pain when urinating.
- Rectal discharge from anal sex.
- Sore throat from oral sex.

Men:

- Yellow/green pus from penis.
- Burning/pain when urinating.
- Sore or swollen testicles.
- Rectal discharge from anal sex.
- Sore throat from oral sex.

Testing

Your doctor can give you a specific test for gonorrhea. A swab is taken from the cervix in women, or from the penis in men.

You can also get free, confidential testing at the Sexually Transmitted Disease Clinic.

#404, 906 - 8th Avenue SW, Calgary

Phone: (403) 944-7575

www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/hecomm/std/STDclinic.htm

Prevention

- If you are sexually active, always use condoms.
- Get tested and avoid sexual contact if you think you are at risk.
- If you have been tested and treated for gonorrhea, don't have sexual contact until you have been re-tested.

For more information

AIDS Calgary Awareness Association

#200, 1509 Centre Street S.

Calgary, Alberta, T2G 2E6

(403) 508-2500

info@aids Calgary.org

www.aids Calgary.org

Sources:

1. Calgary Health Region, www.calgaryhealthregion.ca
2. Alberta Health & Wellness, www.health.gov.ab.ca/public/dis_index.html#STDs
3. AHW, Disease Control & Prevention Branch, www.publichealthworks.ca/archive/2006/2006_01_Singh_ChangingEpidemiologyofSTIs.pdf
4. Health Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/std-mts/gono_e.html