

## GONORRHEA

Catherine is a 24years old college student, tall, pretty, dark blue eyes, and long hair. She's a third year student, good grades, with her social life active and most especially has an active *sex life*. Suddenly she began noticing some pains during urination, pains during sex and she became really worried. After a while she started having some vaginal discharge and bleeding during periods so she decided to visit her doctor. Getting to the hospital, she got tested and it was discovered that she had *GONORRHEA*.

### What is gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted disease. Commonly found in young adults. This infection is caused by the bacteria *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* which has an ability to replicate rapidly in the mucus membrane because it requires a warm moist environment for growth. It may grow in the cervix, bladder, uterus, fallopian tube, mouth or even throat.

Gonorrhea is the second most transmitted disease in United States and happens to be common in women than in men. Routine genital screening is highly recommended for women who are sexually active especially women above 25 years.

### How can it be transmitted?

Gonorrhea can be transmitted mainly through sexual intercourse because of it high rate of replication and survival in the mouth, vagina, penis, throat and rectum. It can also be transmitted through contact with an infected body fluids, and also transmitted from mother to child during delivery.

### Signs and symptoms

most people infected with gonorrhea often do not have symptoms. It may take 2-10days or 30 days before symptoms will manifest. Therefore knowing when to seek for medical advice is often difficult.

#### For women<sup>[1]</sup>

- Painful sex

- Painful urination
- Yellowish-green or whitish vaginal discharge
- Lower abdominal or pelvic pain
- Burning when urinating
- Conjunctivitis (red, itchy eyes)
- Bleeding between periods
- Spotting after intercourse
- Swelling of the vulva (vulvitis)
- Burning in the throat (due to oral sex)
- Swollen glands in the throat (due to oral sex)

**For men;**

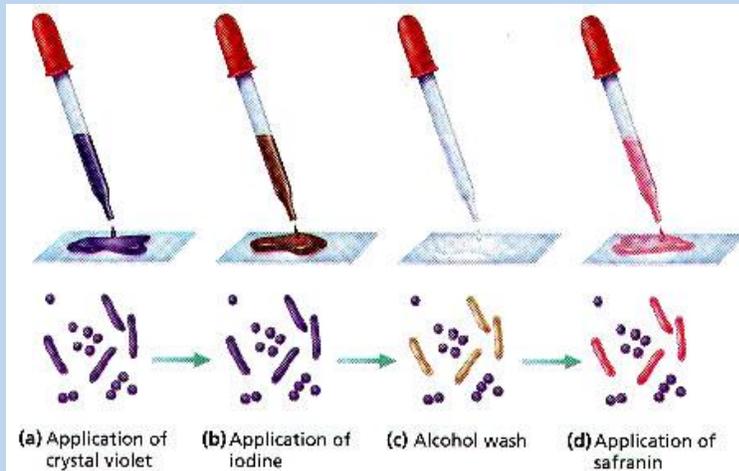
- pus-like discharge from the penis



- pain or burning feeling while urinating
- more frequent urination than usual

**Testing.**

Lab testing is usually the best way to diagnose this infection. Test can be carried out by testing the discharge from the vagina, penis, urethra or anus. Test can also be done by taking cells samples from place where this bacterial is likely to grow e.g cervix, throat, penis, urethra. Urine can also be tested. Direct culture screening as well as nucleic acid amplification tests are the most commonly used methods whereas Nucleic acid amplification test is considered the standard for screening and diagnosis of this infection. In addition there is high increase in the use of vaginal swab culture technique, collected by providers or patients themselves.



### Can it be treated?

Sure! Gonorrhea can be treated by the use of antibiotics since it is caused by bacteria. Due to the development of antibiotic resistance it is necessary to visit your physician in order to get the right prescription and course of treatment. Antibiotics mainly *ciprofloxazin* , *cefalosporins* and *ofloxacin* are often used. Patients who are diagnosed with gonorrhea often happen to have *chlamydia* as well therefore patients should be tested and treated of both infections. Patients should be treated alongside their partners in other to prevent reoccurrence of the infection.

Gonorrhea can be cured, but when left untreated can often lead to severe health problems and complications. It may spread to unaffected areas causing some diseases such as inflammation of the epididymis, pelvic inflammatory disease, and diseases affecting the joints and the valves of the heart.

Being the leading cause of bacteria resistance, always remember to complete your medication, so as to prevent reoccurrence and ensure that your partner is treated as well.

*References.*

1. <http://www.webmd.com/sexual-conditions/guide/gonorrhea>
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6. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3150204/>

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