



UNIVERSITY OF EMBU

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

HEALTH MESSAGE ON GONORRHEA

Definition

Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted disease caused by infection with the *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* bacterium. The bacteria infect the mucous membranes of the reproductive tract including the cervix, uterus, and fallopian tubes in women and the urethra in women and men. The bacteria can also affect the mucous membrane of the mouth, throat, eyes and rectum.

Transmission

Transmission is through sexual contact with penis, vagina, mouth or anus of an infected person.

Note: Ejaculation does not have to occur for gonorrhea to be transmitted or acquired.

The bacteria can also be transmitted to babies from infected mothers during childbirth and will usually affect the eyes of the babies.

Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms usually appear one to fourteen days after infection.

Men:

1. Pain when passing urine.
2. White, yellow or green discharge from the urethra.
3. Some men may complain of testicular pain or scrotal pain.
4. If left untreated it can also lead to epididymitis (swelling of the tubes in the testicles).



Women:

Most women remain asymptomatic (don't show any symptoms). Even when they have symptoms, they are so mild and sometimes mistaken for other bladder or vaginal infection.

Initial symptoms include:

1. Pain when passing urine.
2. Increased abnormal vaginal discharge.
3. Vaginal bleeding between periods.

Note: Pharyngeal infection may cause a sore throat.

Complications

1. Infertility in women: Gonorrhoea can result in scarring of fallopian tubes, increase risk of pregnancy complications and infertility
2. Infertility in men resulting from untreated epididymitis.
3. Infection with gonorrhoea increases risk of infection with HIV. A co-infection of gonorrhoea and HIV makes passing both diseases easier to sexual partners.
4. Gonorrhoea infection in babies can result in blindness, sores on the scalp and infections.

Diagnosis and Testing

1. Urine test, urethral and vaginal swabs for identification of bacteria in a laboratory.

Treatment

Visit your healthcare provider with your sexual partner for care, treatment and follow up.

Prevention

- a. Abstinence from sex, including oral sex.
- b. Use condoms consistently and correctly reduces the risk of transmission of gonorrhoea.
- c. Be in a mutually monogamous relationship

For further information and clarification, visit or contact the UoEm Department of Health Services (Mobile Phone No. 0795 188 740 or health@embuni.ac.ke).

