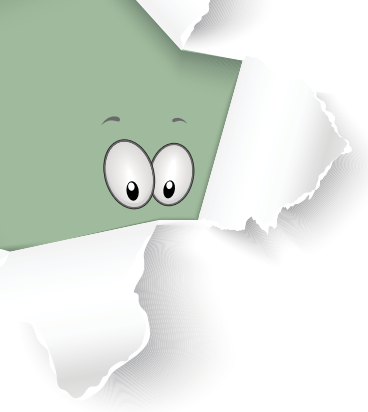
Important information for you.



Why am I receiving this?

Someone you had sexual contact with has been diagnosed with gonorrhea. This person cares about your health and told a health care provider that they may have exposed someone else to gonorrhea. You are receiving this educational material to make sure you are informed of your possible exposure and have information to take care of your health.

Expedited Partner Therapy

Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) is a practice whereby health care providers can prescribe certain antibiotics (medicine) to sexual partners of a person with a sexually transmitted infection (STI), including gonorrhea, without a prior medical evaluation or clinical assessment of the partner(s).

What is EPT?

EPT lets health care providers prescribe medicine to people who may have been exposed to gonorrhea. EPT will be given to you as either:

- A prescription that can be filled at any pharmacy; or
- Medication-in-hand, where the full dose of medicine is delivered to you by your sex partner.

If you have a prescription and do not have health insurance, or cannot afford the medicine, call your local health department to see if you can get free or low-cost treatment. You may also qualify for one of New York State's health insurance programs.

How do I use EPT?

EPT is easy!

Simply follow these steps:

1. Read this information to find out about EPT, gonorrhea, and the medicine used to treat it. Pay close attention to the information about the medicine. Make sure that you can take it safely. For more information about gonorrhea visit: https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/3802.pdf

2. The medicine given to you specifically treats gonorrhea.* You should contact your health care provider or a local health department to get tested for other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), including HIV.
3. If you have a prescription, go to a local pharmacy and fill the prescription.
4. Once you have the medicine, follow the information provided. If you have questions, talk with a pharmacist or health care provider.
5. Follow-up with your health care provider or sexual health clinic in 3-months to make sure that you do not have gonorrhea. Get tested for other STIs, including HIV.
6. If you have other sex partners who you think may have been exposed to gonorrhea, contact your health care provider or sexual health clinic and ask about Partner Services – a way to anonymously notify your sexual partners of potential exposure to an STI and/or HIV.

*If you also get EPT for chlamydia, please note that you will need to take both prescriptions to cure both chlamydia and gonorrhea. Please review information about chlamydia and consult with a health care provider. https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/3835.pdf

If you think you could be pregnant, please get a pregnancy test before starting any treatment, as certain medications may not be safe to take during pregnancy.

If you are pregnant, please consult a health care provider for an examination and testing for STIs which can affect your pregnancy and delivery.

What is Gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is an STI caused by bacteria that you can get from oral, vaginal, or anal sex.

Anyone who has sex can get gonorrhea. Some people are more likely to get it. These include people who:

- Are between 15 and 24 years of age; and/or
- Have new sex partners or multiple sex partners; and/or
- Do not correctly use a latex or polyurethane condom or dental dam when they have sex.

Gonorrhea can infect the genitals (penis or vagina), the mouth, throat, and rectum. Gonorrhea is spread through sex with someone who has gonorrhea without the proper use of a condom or dental dam.

How do I know if I have Gonorrhea?

There are many signs/symptoms of gonorrhea infection, however, some people may not experience any symptoms (asymptomatic). Those who have no symptoms can still pass the infection to other sex partners.

If you do have symptoms, they usually start within 60 days after you had sex with someone who has gonorrhea. Many times, symptoms appear within a few weeks. People with symptoms may have one or more of the following:

- Painful, frequent urination
- Flu-like symptoms (fever, nausea, sore throat)
- Discharge/unusual fluids from the genitals
- Yellow-white or greenish-white discharge from the penis

- Greenish-yellow fluid from vagina
- Vaginal spotting or bleeding between periods or during sex
- Redness and swelling of the opening of the penis
- Bleeding, itching, or pus from the rectum
- Painful bowel movements
- Throat infection with swollen glands in the neck

If symptoms of a more serious infection are present (such as abdominal, pelvic, testicular pain, fever, nausea, or vomiting) you should seek medical care as soon as possible.

Can Gonorrhea be cured?

The medicine that you have been given will cure gonorrhea in most cases. Some people may have to take different medicine. For more information, read the "Medication Section" box below.

If gonorrhea is not treated early, it can become more serious. The infection can also spread to other parts of the body.

If you performed oral sex on someone who has gonorrhea, the medicine might not work as well. Still take the medicine, but you should try to see a health care provider to determine whether additional treatment is needed. Be sure to tell the health care provider that you had oral sex with someone who was treated for gonorrhea.

How can I protect myself?

Even if you had gonorrhea before, you can still get it again. Your body does not become immune to the infection.

Preventing STIs is an important part of your sexual health. There are a few things that you can do to protect yourself from getting gonorrhea or other STIs and HIV.

TEST. Get tested for other STIs.
Call your local health department or your health care provider to find out how to get tested for other STIs, including HIV, and how to notify your sexual partner(s) of potential STI exposure through Partner Services.

3-Site Testing: You should get tested at each body site where you have sex. Certain STIs, such as gonorrhea and chlamydia, can infect the genitals, throat, and rectum. Testing the genitals only may miss an infection you have elsewhere.

TAKE. Take the medicine.
The medicine that you have been prescribed or given is one dose of cefixime (800mg). If the health care provider suspects you may also have been exposed to chlamydia, you may receive a 7-day course of doxycycline (100mg). It is important to take all of the pills prescribed to you as instructed. If gonorrhea and chlamydia are not treated, it can lead to serious health risks, including infertility, and/or pelvic inflammatory disease in females.

WAIT. Wait to have sex.
After you and your partner(s) each take all of the medicine, wait at least 7 days before you have any sex. This gives the medicine time to work. If you have sex too soon, you or your partner(s) could get the infection again. Talk about the risks of STIs with new partner(s) BEFORE you have sex.

USE. Use a condom or dental dam every time you have oral, anal, or vaginal sex.
When used correctly, latex or polyurethane condoms and dental dams can greatly reduce the risk of getting STIs, including gonorrhea. If you are HIV positive, or may have been exposed to HIV, you should contact your health care provider for a complete exam, including testing for STIs and HIV.

Get checked at 3 months to make sure you do not have gonorrhea, or sooner if your symptoms appear or reappear after taking the medicine!

Medication Section

Please read all of the directions on the medication before taking anything.

Cefixime and doxycycline:

- DO NOT take cefixime or doxycycline if you are allergic to these medicines, or other macrolide or tetracycline antibiotics. Call your health care provider for a medicine that is safe for you.
- DO NOT take if you have a serious long-term illness, such as kidney, heart, or liver disease. Call your health care provider for a medicine that is safe for you.
- DO NOT take if you are pregnant. Instead, first call your health care provider or sexual health clinic.
- DO NOT take if you are currently taking another prescription medication, including medicine for diabetes. Call your health care provider for a medicine that is safe for you.

- If you also received doxycycline:
  - avoid direct sunlight: doxycycline may make your skin more sensitive to the sun, increasing your risk of sunburn.
  - DO NOT take doxycycline within 2-hours of taking an antacid that contains aluminum or magnesium. This includes Rolaids, Maalox, Mylanta, Pepsid Complete, Milk of Magnesia and others. These antacids can make azithromycin less effective.
  - DO NOT take doxycycline within 2-hours of eating or drinking dairy products such as milk, cheese, or yogurt. Dairy products will make doxycycline less effective

Cefixime and doxycycline are antibiotics. Like other medicine, some people have side effects. Side-effects may include: diarrhea, upset stomach, stomach pain, constipation, headache, feeling tired or dizzy, or getting a rash. Women may also have vaginal itching or discharge. If you have any of these side-effects and they do not go away on their own in a few days, talk to your health care provider.

If you vomit (throw-up) within 24-hours of taking the medicine, call your health care provider. The medicine might not have gotten into your body to treat the infection.

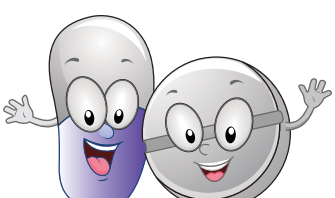
Get emergency medical help (call 911) if you have any signs of an allergic reaction:

- Hives (small red bumps on your body)
- Difficulty breathing
- Swelling on your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Call your health care provider or pharmacist if you have any questions about your medication.

For more information about STIs or to find a local clinic for testing and treatment, visit: www.health.ny.gov/STD

For more STI testing locations, visit: https://gettested.cdc.gov



health.ny.gov/EPTpublications

NEW YORK STATE | Department of Health

21288 11/22