



GONORRHEA:

A Guide for Partners Who Received EPT



Why am I getting medicine or a prescription?

- » Your sex partner has been diagnosed with gonorrhea (gon-uh-REE-uh). You may have gonorrhea, too. It is a sexually transmitted infection (STI). STIs are spread through oral, vaginal, or anal sex. The good news is, once you are treated, you won't spread gonorrhea to others.
- » Gonorrhea is easy to treat (cure) by taking a medicine called cefixime (su-FIX-eem). This medicine is very safe.
- » Your sex partner was treated. You need to be treated, too. That's why a health care provider gave your partner medicine or a prescription for you. Getting treated this way, without seeing a health care provider, is called Expedited Partner Therapy or EPT.

What do I need to know about gonorrhea?

- » Most people with gonorrhea don't have symptoms (signs of infection). You may have gonorrhea and not know it but can still pass it on to others.
- » If you do have symptoms, you may have pain or a burning feeling when you urinate (pee), or a discharge (drip) from the penis, vagina or anus.

Why should I take the medicine?

- » If you don't get treated, you may develop serious, even life-long health problems. Having an untreated STI can make it easier to get HIV.
- » If you don't get treated, you may not be able to get pregnant.
- » Pregnant people with gonorrhea can pass the infection to their babies, causing very serious health problems.

If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant

- » Cefixime is safe to take during pregnancy. But, even if you take the medicines, you should see a health care provider right away. That way you can make sure you get the best care for you and your baby.

I'll take the medicine. But should I see a health care provider?

- » Seeing a health care provider is best. But, if you cannot see a health care provider in the next few days, take the EPT medicines or fill the prescriptions your partner has given you.
- » Even if you take the medicine, see a health care provider as soon as possible to get tested for other STIs, too. You may have more than one STI at the same time. This medicine will not cure other STIs.



Reasons not to take the medicine and see a health care provider instead.

Cefixime is a safe medicine. But, do not take it if you:

- Have lower belly pain
- Have pain during sex
- Are vomiting
- Have a rash or fever
- Have pain or swelling in the testicles (balls)
- Have had a rash, breathing problems or allergic reaction to cefixime or other medicines.
- Have a serious long-term illness, such as kidney, heart or liver disease
- Take other prescription medicines

If any of these are true for you, see a health care provider **as soon as possible**. Your health care provider will find the best medicine for you.



HOW TO TAKE THE MEDICINE

- » Take cefixime with food to help prevent upset stomach.
- » If you throw up in the hour after taking your medicine, you need to get more medicine. In this case, it's best to see a health care provider as soon as possible.
- » After taking your medicine, wait at least 7 days before having sex. If you do have sex, use a condom or dental dam (for oral sex) so you don't get infected again.
- » Do not take antacids, such as Tums, Roloids, or Maalox for 2 hours before or after taking the medicine.
- » Do not share or give your medicine to anyone else.

Side Effects

- » Most people have no side effects (feel sick) from cefixime. Some people may get: diarrhea; upset stomach; dizziness; vaginal yeast infection. These side effects are not usually serious.

Allergic reactions

IF YOU HAVE SIGNS OF AN ALLERGIC REACTION, call 911 or go to the Emergency Room immediately. These include: trouble breathing, throat tightness, swelling of your lips or tongue, or hives (very itchy skin bumps or welts).

The Maryland Department of Health wants to learn about any serious problems you may have had with the medicine. If you think you had an allergic reaction, contact: **410-767-6700**.

If you are a man who has sex with men

- » You should get tested for gonorrhea and other STIs, too. Since you may have gonorrhea, you also may have syphilis and/or HIV and not know it. It is very important that you see a health care provider and get tested for STIs.



Avoid STIs in the Future

- » The only way to completely avoid STIs, including HIV, is not to have sex. If you do have sex, do it safely. **Use a condom every time for every kind of sex – anal, vaginal, or oral sex. You can also use a dental dam for oral sex:** <https://www.cdc.gov/condom-use/communication-resources/index.html>
- » You can lower your chances of getting STIs, including HIV, by talking to your partners about getting tested and treated.

For low-cost or free STI/HIV testing and treatment services:

- Find your local health department at health.maryland.gov/sexualhealth
- Go to gettested.cdc.gov
- Call **800-232-4636 / TTY: 888-232-6348**