



GONORRHEA:

A Guide for Patients Receiving EPT for Their Partners



Why am I getting medicine or a prescription?

- » You have been diagnosed with gonorrhea (gon-uh-REE-uh). 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.
- » You have been given a prescription for cefixime (su-FIX-eem). Or, you may have been given the medicine itself. This is to treat (cure) your gonorrhea. You were also given the same prescription or medicine to give to your sex partners.
- » Bringing medicine or a prescription to your partners this way is called Expedited Partner Therapy, or EPT. Once your partners are treated, they won't develop serious health problems or pass gonorrhea back to you, or on to others.

What do I need to know about gonorrhea?

- » Most people with gonorrhea don't have any symptoms (signs of infection). You can have gonorrhea and not know it.
- » Or, you may have discharge (drip) from the penis, vagina and/or anus, pain, or a burning feeling when you urinate (pee).
- » 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 during pregnancy, causing very serious health problems.

What should I do next?

- ✓ **Get treated.**
- ✓ **Tell all your recent sex partners.** Explain that you have been diagnosed with gonorrhea and got medicine to treat it. They need medicine, too.
- ✓ **Give them the medicine or prescription and the printed information** from your health care provider.
- ✓ **Encourage your partners to visit a health care provider.** They should get tested for other STIs, even if they take the EPT medicine.
- ✓ **Visit a healthcare provider in 3 months** to get tested again for gonorrhea.

How do I tell my partners I was treated for gonorrhea?

- » Telling your partners that you have an STI can be hard, but it's the right thing to do. The best way to tell your partners is by being open and honest.
- » Your partners may feel surprised, upset, angry, or scared. These feelings are normal. By offering them EPT medicine, you are showing that you care enough to help.



"This medicine (or prescription) is to cure an STI called gonorrhea. I took the medicine, and you should, too, since you also might have the infection. There is no way to know who got it first because most people don't have symptoms. You should read the information that came with the medicine and go to a health care provider to get checked for other STIs, even after taking the EPT."

What if a partner blames me?

- » People worry about their partners being angry, but you may not be the one who passed the infection to them. Explain that gonorrhea usually doesn't cause symptoms, so it's hard to know who had the infection first. A person can have it for a long time and not know it.
- » The most important thing is to tell your partners about the infection. Take steps so that you and your sex partners get healthy and avoid future STIs.



STOP

Reasons why EPT might not be a good choice for your partner

Ask your health care provider about other ways to get your partners treated

- » You think a partner could become violent.
- » Your partner is a man who has sex with other men. He may have other infections, like syphilis and/or HIV. He should visit a health care provider as soon as possible to get tested for other STIs.



STI

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.

Other Questions You May Have:

? My sex partners have no symptoms. Should they still take the medicine?

Yes. Most people with gonorrhea may not have any symptoms. Taking the medicine will cure the infection.

? What if my sex partner is pregnant or thinks they may be pregnant?

If your sex partner is pregnant or thinks they may be pregnant, it's safe for them to take this medicine. The medicine used to treat gonorrhea will not hurt the baby. But they should see a health care provider as soon as possible to be tested for other STIs, which they can pass on to the baby during pregnancy.

? What should I do after giving my partners these medicines?

This medicine takes 7 days to work. Do not have sex (vaginal, oral, or anal) for at least 7 days after both you and your partners have been treated. You can get gonorrhea again if you have sex before the medicine cures your partners. If you do have sex, use a condom or dental dam (for oral sex) so you don't get gonorrhea again.

? What if a partner won't take the medicine?

If a sex partner won't take the medicine, they should see a health care provider as soon as possible to get tested for gonorrhea, chlamydia, and other STIs. Tell your partner that not getting treated could result in serious health problems.