

Gonorrhea & Syphilis

today's realities



For More Information

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Test your understanding with a quick quiz.

National STD Hotline:
(800) 227-8922

**Don't stay in
the dark.
Get In the Know!**



Ancient Enemies

Gonorrhea and syphilis are sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) that have been around for thousands of years. For most of that time they were incurable. Since the early 1900s, things have changed. Today, a variety of special medicines can cure these diseases.

Untreated gonorrhea can complicate pregnancies or can cause infertility.

Untreated syphilis can lead to eye diseases, heart, bone, and brain damage, and even death.

Still, many thousands of people each year get syphilis or gonorrhea and suffer serious consequences. About 400,000 new cases of gonorrhea are reported each year in the U.S. Just as many new cases go undiagnosed and untreated.

The suffering can be prevented. We can stop syphilis and gonorrhea.

curable

People at Risk

Anyone who is sexually active can get gonorrhea or syphilis, unless they have sex with only one uninfected partner who only has sex with them (a monogamous relationship).

Doctors are concerned that both syphilis and gonorrhea are increasing in men who have sex with men.

Another group of people at risk are those who do not have access to being tested.

Getting Infected

Gonorrhea and syphilis are spread through sexual contact. Thinking that you are not at risk can be really dangerous.

Gonorrhea and syphilis can be passed by an infected pregnant woman to her baby, either in the womb or during birth. Many babies of women with syphilis die before birth or soon after birth.

Syphilis can also be passed by kissing or touching an infected person or by sharing needles with an infected person.

History of Syphilis

www.intheknowzone.com/syphilis/history



in the know

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About Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea, sometimes called “the clap,” is caused by bacteria that infect the genitals, mouth, and rectum.

Up to half of the people infected with gonorrhea have no symptoms. So people might have gonorrhea without knowing it.

Symptoms may include:

- Painful urination.
- Creamy or green, pus-like discharge from penis, vagina, or rectum.
- Lower abdominal or testicular pain.
- Unexpected menstrual bleeding (spotting between periods).
- Rectal pain or bleeding.
- Scratchy feeling in the throat.



Complications of Gonorrhea

Like other STDs, gonorrhea increases a person's risk of getting HIV/AIDS.

Many women with gonorrhea develop pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). PID causes intense pain and scarring in the fallopian tubes. Scarred fallopian tubes can lead to infertility or ectopic pregnancies (outside of the womb).

Untreated gonorrhea can cause arthritis, heart valve damage, or brain damage in men or women.

Complications of Gonorrhea

www.intheknowzone.com/gonorrhea/problems



About Syphilis

Syphilis is a very serious STD. It is sometimes called “bad blood.”

When a syphilis infection is new, it is very contagious (primary syphilis).

One sign of primary syphilis is a painless sore or sores on the genitals, rectum, mouth, or other parts of the body.

Without treatment, secondary syphilis develops. Symptoms include a rash on the hands and soles of the feet, hair loss, fever, swollen glands, and weight loss. **Secondary syphilis is also very contagious.**

Complications of Syphilis

Having syphilis makes it at least two to five times more likely that a person will get and spread HIV/AIDS.

Untreated syphilis may stop showing any signs after a while. This is called the “latent” period. The person may think that the disease is gone. In fact, during the latent period, syphilis moves to the brain, eyes, heart, kidneys, bones, or other body areas. The cartilage in the nose can also cave in.

Someone who is never treated may develop late-stage (*tertiary*) syphilis. This can lead to: dementia (insanity), organ failure, mushroom-shaped growths all over the body, blindness, heart disease, and death.

Complications of Syphilis

www.intheknowzone.com/syphilis/problems



Don't Let It Happen to You

Gonorrhea and syphilis are preventable. The best way to prevent gonorrhea or syphilis is to avoid sex. Two **uninfected** people who only have sex with each other are also safe from disease.

Make sober decisions about sex. Alcohol and other drugs can cloud your thinking. You could make dangerous choices if you were drunk or high.

People who have more than one sex partner, or whose partner may have other partners, must use a new latex condom for every sex act of any kind.

However, condoms don't always cover all infected areas.

If you have any sexual contact that could possibly expose you to an STD, get tested at a clinic right away.

It is very important that all sexually active people get tested for sexually transmitted diseases at least once a year.

If syphilis might be present, blood tests or other tests will be done.

Syphilis Diagnosis

www.intheknowzone.com/syphilis/diagnosis

A Complete Cure

Gonorrhea and syphilis can be cured. If they are found early, damage to a person's organs can be prevented. The key is getting tested regularly and following a full treatment if infected. Gonorrhea and syphilis are treated with special medicines (antibiotics), given by a doctor.

Treatment of Gonorrhea

www.intheknowzone.com/gonorrhea/cure

A Bright Future

No one should suffer from gonorrhea or syphilis. Scientists believe that syphilis could be eliminated from the U.S. in just a few years.

Remember, not having sex at all or having only one, uninfected sex partner are the best ways to keep from getting any STD. Using latex condoms and getting tested at least once a year can prevent these diseases from spreading. Visit your doctor or family planning clinic to protect yourself and others.



bad blood

preventable