Managing Gonorrhea

Being told you have a sexually transmitted infection like gonorrhea can leave you with a lot of questions. Asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

Vocabulary to Know
Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here’s what they mean.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Neisseria gonorrhoeae</em></td>
<td>The bacterium that causes a gonorrhea infection.</td>
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<td>Asymptomatic Gonorrhea</td>
<td>When you are infected with the bacteria but don’t look or feel sick. Many people with gonorrhea don’t show any signs or symptoms of an infection, especially women.</td>
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<td>Dysuria</td>
<td>When it hurts to pee. This is one of the most common signs of a gonorrhea infection.</td>
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<td>Nucleic Acid Amplification Testing (NAAT)</td>
<td>A test used to diagnose gonorrhea and other sexually transmitted infections. It works by detecting the bacteria in a urine sample or swab taken from the throat or anus.</td>
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<td>Gonorrhea Culture</td>
<td>Another diagnostic tool doctors use to confirm a gonorrhea infection. It’s done by swabbing places where the infection might be (like inside the vagina, penis, or anus) and putting the sample into a special container to see if the bacteria responsible grow.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID)</td>
<td>When a woman’s reproductive organs get infected, often as a result of an untreated sexually transmitted infection like gonorrhea. PID can lead to pain and fever, as well as potentially serious issues like infertility and ectopic pregnancies.</td>
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<td>Antimicrobial Resistant Gonorrhea</td>
<td>Some types of gonorrhea are harder to treat because antibiotics don’t work as well as they used to at curing infections. Antimicrobial resistant gonorrhea can only be treated by a limited number of medications, if at all.</td>
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Questions to Ask
These questions will help you start a conversation with your doctor about how to best manage your gonorrhea.

About Symptoms
- I don’t feel sick. Why do you think I have gonorrhea?
- My sexual partner doesn’t have any symptoms at all. Does that mean they aren’t infected?
- Is there anything I can do to relieve the pain I have when I pee?

About Causes & Risk Factors
- How does gonorrhea spread? Can you get it from oral or anal sex?
- Do you have to ejaculate in order to get (or transmit) gonorrhea?
- Is gonorrhea common?
- Is there anything in my medical or sexual history that makes me more likely to get gonorrhea than others?
- Am I at risk for pelvic inflammatory disease or infertility because of the infection?

About Diagnosis
- What about my symptoms makes you think I have gonorrhea and not something else?
- If the NAAT came back positive for gonorrhea, will you need to do a gonorrhea culture to confirm?
- Should I tell my sexual partner(s) I have gonorrhea? Will they need to be tested, too?

About Treatment
- How long should I wait after treatment to have sex?
- Will I need to be retested after I’m done with treatment? How will I know if the medications cured my infection?
- What are the side effects of the antibiotics?
- Is there anything I should or shouldn’t do while taking the antibiotics? How can I make sure the treatment is as effective as possible?