

Non-Gonococcal Urethritis (NGU)

Non-Gonococcal Urethritis (NGU) is an infection of the male urethra, the tube that carries urine from the bladder to the outside of the body. 'Nongonococcal' means the infection is not caused by the gonorrhea bacteria.

Causes

NGU is often caused by a bacterial infection, but it can also be caused by a virus or protozoa. When NGU is caused by bacteria, treatment with antibiotics will most often cure the infection. To find out if you have NGU, you need to be examined by a health care provider and have lab tests done.

NGU is usually passed through exchanging body fluids during vaginal, anal, or oral sex.

Symptoms

Symptoms in men may include a slight burning feeling when urinating, an itching inside the penis, or a clear to creamy white fluid (discharge) from the urethra.

Some men with NGU show no symptoms, or mild symptoms that may be unnoticeable. Usually, the symptoms are seen or experienced more in the morning.

Complications

Bacterial NGU that goes untreated may cause complications such as epididymitis or reactive arthritis. If NGU is caused by chlamydia, the untreated chlamydia can cause pain and swelling in one or both testicles and may result in infertility. As well, the bacteria or virus that causes NGU can cause complications in women. Therefore, sexual partners of men diagnosed with NGU also require testing and treatment.

Tests and Diagnosis

Diagnosis of NGU requires an exam and testing by your health care provider.

Treatment

NGU is treated with antibiotics, which usually work very well to cure the infection. It is important to take all the medication as directed, even if you start to feel better. Go back to see your health care provider if you still have symptoms after you finish your medication.

Treatment for Partners

If you have NGU, you will be asked who you had sex with in the past 2 months (60 days). Anyone you have had sex with in the past two months will need to be tested and treated. Partners are almost always given medication whether they have symptoms or not. If you have not had sex in the past two months, your last partner should be tested.

There are a few ways you can tell partners about STI testing. Some people want to tell partners in person, others want to tell partners anonymously. You can talk to your health care provider about what ways might work best for you.

Avoid Re-infection or Prolonging Infection

It takes time for an infection to be cleared from the body, so it is important that you *do not* have any oral, vaginal or anal sex for 7 days after you and your partners start the antibiotic treatment. If you or your partner(s) do not finish the treatment or miss pills, the infection may be passed back to you or your partners and may cause problems later on. If that happens, talk with your health care provider to see if you or your partners need more treatment.