

# Nongonococcal Urethritis/NGU

Brown Health Services Patient Education Series

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## What is NGU?

NGU is an infection of the urethra. The urethra is the tube connecting the bladder to the outside of the body. In people with penises, the urethra also conveys ejaculate fluid. Urethritis is the medical term for when the urethra gets irritated or inflamed. NGU is considered a sexually transmitted infection (STI).

## Sexually Transmitted Infections that cause NGU:

- Chlamydia
- Mycoplasma Genitalium
- Trichomoniasis
- Ureaplasma
- Gonorrhea

If left untreated, organisms causing NGU can cause serious infections in the testicles and prostate or the uterus and fallopian tubes.

## What are the symptoms of NGU?

Most common symptoms include:

- pain, burning, or stinging when urinating
- discharge, often described as “fluid leak” from the penis or vagina
- redness or swelling at the tip of the penis
- occasional rectal pain

Note: If you have a vagina, these symptoms may be more likely to be a urinary tract infection (UTI), which is not an STI; if you have these symptoms you should see a provider for diagnostic testing.

## How long after exposure do symptoms appear?

The incubation period (time between exposure and appearance of symptoms) for NGU varies from several days to a few weeks.

## How is it diagnosed?

NGU is usually diagnosed by urine tests for Gonorrhea and Chlamydia. In some cases, your Provider may collect swabs from the penis or vagina. Note: a pelvic exam and blood test may also be required.

## Treatment

Treatment usually involves taking antibiotics. If your doctor or nurse thinks you have urethritis, you will probably get treatment right away. You do not need to wait until your test results come back.

## Special Note:

Take all of the medication you are given, even if the symptoms start to go away before the medicine is gone. If you stop taking the medicine, you may leave some of the infection in your body.

If given a seven day course of antibiotics, partners should abstain from sex for duration of treatment and until they have no more symptoms. In people with prolonged symptoms the duration of antibiotic course may be extended. Your Provider will advise if this becomes necessary.

## Partner treatment:

If diagnosed with Chlamydia or Gonorrhea, it is very important that any sexual partner(s) within the past 60 days be treated as well. If you are treated and a

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sexual partner is not, you may become reinfected if the partner still has the infection. During treatment, it is important to abstain from intercourse or any exchange of genital fluids. If treatment is a single dose, then you should abstain from sex for the 7 days following. Re-testing is needed at 3 months post exposure and treatment.

Please note Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) is offered to partner(s) at no cost to you, please let your Provider know to write an extra prescription as needed.

## **Prevention of NGU**

- Using a latex condom every time you have sex
- Avoiding sex when you or your partner have any symptoms that could be caused by an infection (such as itching, discharge, or pain with urination)
- Abstinence

Important Note:

If you had an STI at any time, your doctor or nurse might also check you for other STIs now or in the future. People can get more than one STI at the same time. Plus, STIs do not always cause symptoms, so it helps to check.