What is gonorrhea?
Gonorrhea is a bacterial infection that can infect the urinary and reproductive tracts. It is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) that infects both males and females.

How do you get gonorrhea?
Gonorrhea is spread:
- Through anal, vaginal or oral sex with an infected person.
- From mother to baby (during birth).

Can you protect yourself from gonorrhea?
Yes. The best ways to avoid gonorrhea are to:
- Not have sex (abstinence).
- Limit your number of sex partners.
- Use a latex condom and/or dental dam correctly each time you have sex.
- Talk to your sex partners about gonorrhea and other STIs.

What are the symptoms of gonorrhea?
You can get gonorrhea in the anus, eyes, mouth, throat, urinary tract or uterus. You may not notice any symptoms. If you do have symptoms, they will vary depending on what part of your body is infected.
Females may have abnormal bleeding from the vagina. In both males and females symptoms may include:
- Painful peeing or bowel movements.
- Yellow or clear discharge from penis, vagina or anus.
- Sore throat (from oral sex).
- Itching in the genitals or anus.
You should call a health care provider or the Guilford County Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health right away if you have any of these symptoms or if you have had sex with someone who has gonorrhea or has these symptoms. Since the symptoms of STIs often resemble one another, diagnosis by a health care provider is the only way to know for sure if you are infected.

Is gonorrhea dangerous?
It can be. Gonorrhea stays in your body if it is not treated. If you have gonorrhea, you may have a higher risk of getting HIV infection if you have unprotected sex with a partner who has HIV. Gonorrhea can also spread to the blood or joints. This condition can be very serious.

If you are a woman:
- Gonorrhea can spread into the uterus or fallopian tubes and cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), a serious infection that happens when gonorrhea spreads to the reproductive organs.

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• PID can also cause damage that makes you unable to get pregnant.
• Untreated gonorrhea may cause chronic pain in your pelvic area.
• If you are pregnant and have untreated gonorrhea, you could pass the infection to your baby when giving birth. Gonorrhea can cause serious health problems for babies.

If you are a man:
• You may develop a painful condition in the testicles. In rare cases, this may prevent you from fathering children.

Is there a cure for gonorrhea?
Yes, antibiotics are used to treat and cure gonorrhea.

Can you still have sex?
You should not have sex until:
• You have finished the medicine.
• Your sex partners have been treated and have finished all of their medicine.

Who can I call for more information?

American Social Health Association Hotline: 1-800-227-8922
www.ashastd.org

Guilford County Department of Health and Human Services,
Division of Public Health
Greensboro or High Point: 641-7777
www.myguilford.org