

N.G.U. (Non-gonococcal Urethritis)

What is NGU?

Non-gonococcal urethritis (NGU) is an inflammation of the urethra that is NOT caused by gonorrhea. The urethra is a narrow tube that allows the urine to drain from the bladder. Both men and women can have urethritis, but NGU is more common in males and is usually contracted during sexual activity. All patients who experience symptoms should be tested for both gonorrhea and Chlamydia. Infections of the prostate and testicles may result if an infection is not identified and treated.

What are the symptoms of NGU?

Burning during or after urination is the primary symptom. There may also be a discharge visible at the tip of the penis, especially early in the morning. The discharge may be thick or thin and is usually light yellow in color. Often men report seeing a stain on their underwear but deny seeing a discharge. The symptoms usually appear within 3-21 days after exposure and may last only a few hours or days. Even if the symptoms go away spontaneously, the infection will still be present and treatment is needed. Occasionally no symptoms are reported, but an infection is diagnosed after a man's partner has been diagnosed with an infection or when a routine sexually transmitted disease (STD) screen is done.

What causes NGU?

The primary cause of NGU is a sexually transmitted disease called Chlamydia trachomatis. In approximately one-third of cases, the cause of the symptoms is not identified. In these cases bacteria called *Ureaplasma urelyticum* or *Mycoplasma genitalium* may be the cause. However, specific diagnostic tests are not easily available to identify these bacteria. Fortunately, the same medication used to treat Chlamydia will treat these bacteria also.

What tests will be done?

Gonorrhea and Chlamydia screening will be done. A Chlamydia/gonorrhea test is obtained by briefly placing a tiny swab in the opening of the urethra at the tip of the penis. This may cause brief discomfort and a burning sensation. Chlamydia and gonorrhea testing may also be performed using a urine sample. (Actually, most gonorrhea and chlamydia testing is done with urine). **It is important not to urinate for at least two hours before coming for an appointment.** When a person is diagnosed with one type of sexually transmitted disease, he may wish to be tested for syphilis, hepatitis B and HIV also. This should be discussed with the provider.

How is NGU treated?

An antibiotic will be prescribed by your provider. **Be sure to finish all of the medication. Abstain from all sexual contact until 7 days/1 week after you have finished your medication AND until seven days after your partner has finished all of his/her medication.** Condom use is recommended for several weeks afterward. If symptoms re-occur or do not completely clear after finishing the medication, contact your health care provider for re-evaluation.

Do sexual partners need to be tested/treated?

YES! Any sexual partner (male or female) with whom you have had contact within the preceding 60 days should be notified of the diagnosis and instructed to seek medical evaluation and treatment. Women may not exhibit the urinary symptoms that men experience, but may experience an increase or change in the amount and color of vaginal discharge or notice vaginal burning or itching. It is also very common for women not to notice any symptoms at all. Untreated infection in women may result in infections of the uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries that may impair future ability to become pregnant. Male and female partners may be seen at McKinley Health Center if he/she is registered as a student during the current semester. Most public health departments also offer STD screening, as do most personal physicians.

Reference

CDC: Sexually Transmitted Disease Treatment Guidelines, 2002.

If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: **Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700**

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web site at: <http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu>