

Patients' Guide to Non-Gonococcal Urethritis (NGU)

What is non-gonococcal urethritis?

Non-gonococcal urethritis (NGU) refers to the inflammation (pain, redness, soreness, itch, with discharge) of the male urethra (the tube that carries urine from the bladder to the outside of the body) that is **not** caused by gonorrhoea.

About two-thirds of NGU is caused by an STI, the most common being chlamydia. Other STIs can cause NGU but not all can be tested. The other one-third not caused by STIs can occasionally be caused by irritants or chemicals.

As of now, NGU is only diagnosed in men but female sex partners can be infected by the same bacteria without developing symptoms.

How is it passed?

NGU can be passed from one person to another through sexual contact (vaginal, oral, anal sex).

What are the signs and symptoms?

Symptoms of NGU include:

- Urethral discharge (clear, white, or yellow)
- Burning pain when passing urine
- Itch or irritation at the tip of the penis

Since symptoms of NGU are similar to that of gonorrhoea, laboratory tests are needed to confirm the diagnosis.

When do signs/symptoms appear?

Symptoms of NGU occur usually 1-3 weeks after the infection.

How is NGU diagnosed?

A swab from the tip of the penis is taken to examine the discharge under the microscope. The presence of pus cells indicate inflammation which may be caused by an STI.

A urine test for gonorrhoea and chlamydia will also be done.

Can NGU cause other problems?

If NGU is caused by an STI and left untreated, the infection may:

- Spread to the reproductive organs, e.g. testis and epididymis, causing pain and swelling
- Lead to infertility and complications affecting the skin, joints, and eyes
- Allow untreated female partners to develop pelvic infections, infertility, and/or ectopic pregnancy

Can NGU be treated?

NGU is usually treated with a course of tablet antibiotics, though some individuals may need more than one course of treatment. As NGU is often sexually transmitted, one's sex partner(s) should be treated as well even if they do not have symptoms, and to prevent re-infections.

Do those with NGU need to return for follow-up visits?

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Important Notes on NGU

- Seek immediate treatment from a doctor if you have symptoms.
- Should you have any drug allergies, do inform the doctor during your appointment.
- Avoid sexual activity until cured of NGU
- Complete the course of treatment prescribed
- Refer your sex partner(s) for a check-up so that they can be treated early

Practice safer sex

- Use condoms correctly and every time one has sex
- Avoid drinking excessive amounts of alcohol before or during sex, as this may impair your judgement.
- Have sex without an exchange of bodily fluids (e.g. semen or vaginal secretions).

Reach Out to Us

If you still have queries, feel free to call us at the following numbers:

HIV/STI Hotline (8am – 5pm)

1800 252 1324

Health Info Recorded Hotline (24 hours)

+65 6295 2944

Appointments

+65 6293 9648

You may also visit www.dsc-clinic.sg for more information, or find us at the DSC Clinic, 31 Kelantan Lane #01-16 S(200031).

Disclaimer

We have attempted to provide full, accurate, and up-to-date information in this patient information leaflet, based on current medical evidence and opinion. However, information and advice may vary from different sources and over time. If you have any further questions, do see your doctor or healthcare provider.

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