

New York State Department of Health

Nongonococcal Urethritis (NSU, NGU)

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What is nongonococcal urethritis (NGU)?

NGU refers to an infection of the urethra (the tube running from the bladder through the penis in men or the labia in women through which urine passes) caused by some agent other than gonorrhea. This infection can be caused by any of several different organisms, although the most frequent cause of NGU is a germ called *Chlamydia*, and is a sexually transmitted disease (STD).

Who gets NGU?

NGU is most often found in men since the organisms causing this infection are sexually transmitted and the female urethra is seldom infected during intercourse. Men between the ages of 15 and 30 having multiple sex partners are most at risk for this infection.

How is NGU spread?

NGU is spread almost exclusively through sexual contact involving penis to vagina or penis to rectum contact.

What are the symptoms of NGU?

The symptoms of NGU involve a slight burning or tingling during urination that is sometimes accompanied by a slight (usually clear) discharge (drip) from the urethra.

How soon do symptoms appear?

The symptoms associated with NGU usually appear from one to five weeks after infection. Some people never develop obvious symptoms throughout their infection.

When and for how long is a person able to spread NGU?

A person can spread NGU from the time they are infected until they are cured.

Does past infection with NGU make a person immune?

No. Past infection with NGU does not protect a person from contracting the disease again.

What is the treatment for NGU?

NGU is treated through the use of antibiotics such as tetracycline.

What can be the effect of not being treated for NGU?

If not treated for NGU, a person may experience swelling of the testicles (epididymitis) and infection of the prostate gland. More importantly, they may infect sexual partners.

What can be done to prevent the spread of NGU?

There are a number of ways to prevent the spread of NGU:

- Limit your number of sex partners.
- Use a condom.
- Carefully wash genitals after sexual relations.
- If you think you are infected, avoid any sexual contact and visit your local STD clinic, a hospital or your doctor.
- Notify all sexual contacts immediately so they can obtain examination and treatment.

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