

Gonorrhea (Swab)



Does this test have other names?

GC test, gonorrhea nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT), gonorrhea DNA probe test

What is this test?

Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by *N. gonorrhoeae*. This test looks for DNA of gonorrhea bacteria. It is done on a sample taken from the cervix, urethra, penis, or rectum.

The samples are sent to a special lab where millions of copies of the DNA are made. An advantage of this test is that it can tell gonorrhea bacteria from chlamydia bacteria. Chlamydia is another common STI. This is important because chlamydia and gonorrhea cause the same symptoms.

Why do I need this test?

You may have this test if you have certain risk factors that increase the chance of gonorrhea infection. You may also have this test if your healthcare provider thinks that you have gonorrhea.

Females with gonorrhea often have no symptoms. Those with symptoms may have:

- Vaginal discharge
- Burning feeling when urinating
- Bleeding between periods
- Pelvic pain

If you are pregnant, you may also be checked for gonorrhea as part of prenatal testing. That's because gonorrhea can be passed to the baby during delivery. This may cause blindness or a blood infection that can cause death. Finding and treating gonorrhea prevents these problems.

Males also may not have symptoms. If symptoms happen, they may include:

- Fluid leaking from the penis
- Pain when urinating
- Painful or swollen testicles

What other tests might I have along with this test?

Your healthcare provider may take a sample from your genital region (vagina, cervix, or urethra). If you have had anal or oral sexual contact, your provider may do either a rectal or throat culture, or possibly both. A sample of urine may also be checked. You may also have lab tests to check for other STIs.

What do my test results mean?

Test results may vary depending on your age, gender, health history, and other things. Your test results may be different depending on the lab used. They may not mean you have a problem. Ask your healthcare provider what your test results mean for you.

Normal results are negative, meaning that the lab found no evidence of gonorrhea.

If you test positive for gonorrhea, you'll be started on treatment to cure the disease. If left untreated, gonorrhea can cause severe reproductive and other health problems. Your sexual partners should be tested and treated as well.

How is this test done?

Your healthcare provider will use a sterile, cotton-tipped swab to take a sample from the area to be tested. The swab will be moved from side to side to collect cells. Healthcare providers often swab from more than one area. In other cases, you may be given instructions to collect your own samples. Or a urine sample may also be tested.

What might affect my test results?

If you are providing a urine sample, urinating within 1 to 2 hours of testing may affect the results. Taking antibiotics can also affect your test results. If you are female, your test results could be affected by douching or using vaginal creams within 24 hours of testing.

How do I get ready for this test?

You don't need to prepare for this test. But females shouldn't douche or use vaginal creams within 24 hours of testing. For urine testing, you should not urinate within 1 to 2 hours of the test. In addition, be sure your healthcare provider knows about all medicines, herbs, vitamins, and supplements you are taking. This includes medicines that don't need a prescription and any illegal drugs you may use.

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