# **Listerine to treat gonorrhoea? Daily rinsing and gargling helps to curb the spread of the STI**

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A popular dental hygiene product could help prevent gonorrhoea from spreading, experts have claimed.

Daily use of Listerine may be a cheap way to curb the infection.

Despite being spread sexually, people can carry the infection in their throats for months without suffering any symptoms, passing on the STI through oral sex.

This makes the need for a preventative measure that doesn't rely on condoms even more urgent, scientists claim.

Rising rates of the infection heighten the risk of the emergence of antibiotic resistant strains of Neisseria gonnorhoeae.

[Australian researchers set out to assess](http://sti.bmj.com/content/early/2016/11/29/sextrans-2016-052753) whether Listerine could curb the growth of the bacteria responsible after the company claimed as far back as 1879 that it could be used to cure gonorrhoea.

Scientists led by study author Eric Chow, a research fellow at the Melbourne Sexual Health Centre in Australia, tested different dilutions of the mouthwash and application times, comparing the results to saline solution.

Mouthwash and saline solution was then distributed to gay and bisexual men who had previously tested positive for gonorrhoea in their mouths.

Those using the salt water solution cut their bacteria by just 16 per cent, but the men using Listerine were 80 per cent less likely to test positive for gonorrhoea in their throat five minutes after gargling.

"This readily available, condom-less, and low-cost intervention may have very significant public health implications in the control of gonorrhoea," the researchers wrote in the journal *Sexually Transmitted Infections*.

However, they say more research is needed to confirm their results to determine if mouthwash is an effective way to curb the spread of gonorrhoea.