GONORRHEA INFORMATION FOR PARTNERS

EPT
EXPEDITED PARTNER THERAPY

Why am I getting medicine or a prescription?

- Your sex partner has been diagnosed with gonorrhea (gon-uh-REE-uh). You may have gonorrhea, too. It is a sexually transmitted infection (STI). STIs are spread through oral, vaginal, or anal sex with an infected person.
- Gonorrhea is easy to treat (cure) by taking two medicines called azithromycin (uh-zith-ro-MY-sin) and cefixime (su-FIX-eem). They are both very safe.
- Your sex partner was treated. You need to be treated, too. That's why a health care provider gave your partner medicines or prescriptions for you. Getting treated this way, without seeing a health care provider, is called Expedited Partner Therapy or EPT.

What do I need to know about gonorrhea?

- Most people with gonorrhea don't have symptoms (signs of infections). You may have gonorrhea and not know it. That means you can pass it on to others without knowing it.
- If you do have symptoms, you may have pain or a burning feeling when you urinate (pee). Or you may have a discharge (drip) from the penis, vagina or anus.

Why should I take the medicine?

- If you don't get treated, you may develop serious, even life-long health problems.
- If you don't get treated and you are female, you may not be able to get pregnant.
- Pregnant women with gonorrhea can pass the infection to their babies. Gonorrhea can cause very serious health problems for babies.
- The good news is - once you are treated, you won't infect your partner, or pass the infection on to others.

I'll take the medicine. But should I see a health care provider?

- Seeing a health care provider is best. But, if you cannot see a health care provider in the next few days, take the EPT medicines or fill the prescriptions your partner has given you.
- Even if you take the medicines, see a health care provider as soon as possible.
- That way you can be tested for gonorrhea and other STIs too. You may have more than one STI at the same time. The azithromycin and cefixime will not cure most other STIs.

STOP

Reasons not to take the medicine — and see a health care provider instead.

Azithromycin and cefixime are safe medicines. But, do not take them if you:

- Are female and have lower belly pain, pain during sex, vomiting or fever.
- Are male and have pain or swelling in the testicles (balls) or fever.
- Have had a rash, breathing problems or allergic reaction to azithromycin or other medicine.
- Have a serious long-term illness, such as kidney, heart or liver disease.
- Take another prescription medicine, including medicine for diabetes.

If any of these are true for you, see a health care provider as soon as possible. Your health care provider will find the best medicine for you. If you are not sure, see a health care provider as soon as possible.

How to take the medicine

- Take the azithromycin and cefixime pills all at once and with food, to help prevent upset stomach.
- If you throw up in the hour after taking your medicine, you need to get more medicine. In this case, it's best to see a health care provider as soon as possible.
- After taking your medicine, wait at least 7 days before having sex. If you do have sex, use a condom or dental dam (for oral sex) so you don't get infected again.
- Do not take antacids, such as Tums, Rolaids, or Maalox, for 1 hour before or 2 hours after taking azithromycin and cefixime.
- Do not share or give your medicine to anyone else.

If you are pregnant

Azithromycin and cefixime are both safe to take during pregnancy. But, even if you take the medicines, you should see a health care provider right away. That way you can make sure you get the best care for you and your baby.

If you are a man who has sex with men

In Maryland, men whose sex partners include other men need to be tested for gonorrhea and other STIs, too. Since you may have gonorrhea, you also may have syphilis and/or HIV and not know it. It is very important that you see a health care provider and get tested for STIs.

Side effects

Most people have no side effects (feel sick) from azithromycin and cefixime. Some people may get: diarrhea; slight upset stomach; dizziness; vaginal yeast infection. These side effects are not usually serious.

Allergic reactions

IF YOU HAVE SIGNS OF AN ALLERGIC REACTION, call 911 or go to the Emergency Room immediately. These include: trouble breathing, throat tightness, swelling of your lips or tongue, or hives (very itchy skin bumps or welts).

The Maryland Department of Health wants to learn about any serious problems you may have had with the medicine. If you think you had an allergic reaction, contact:

@mdh.STIclinicalconsult@maryland.gov
410-767-6690

Avoid STIs in the future

The only way to completely avoid STIs, including HIV, is not to have sex. If you do have sex, do it safely. Use a latex condom every time for vaginal and anal sex, and a condom or dental dam for oral sex.

To find low-cost or free STI/HIV testing sites near you, go to: gettested.cdc.gov, call your local health department, or call: 800-232-4636 / TTY: 888-232-6348.

MARYLAND Department of Health

Center for STI Prevention
www.tinyurl.com/EPTMaryland
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