

More cases of antibiotic resistant gonorrhoea identified in England

These cases are in addition to [the case announced in December 2021](#).

A woman in her 20s in London and a heterosexual couple in their 20s based in the Midlands have recently been diagnosed with a strain of *N. gonorrhoeae* with resistance to the antibiotic ceftriaxone.

Ceftriaxone is the main antibiotic used to treat gonorrhoea in the UK and being infected with a ceftriaxone resistant strain means that this antibiotic will not easily treat the infection. Follow-up tests are still awaited to see if treatment has been successful in these 3 recent cases.

Further public health investigations are underway but there are currently no known connections between the cases in London and the Midlands.

Ceftriaxone resistance is most common in the Asia-Pacific region and is occasionally detected in the UK in people who have visited or who have moved to the UK from this region.

Dr Katy Sinka, STI Section Head at the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), said:

After a couple of years without any cases of this hard to treat form of gonorrhoea, we have now seen 4 cases in the last 2 months. It's too soon to say whether this will be the start of a longer-term trend, but we do know that STIs are on the rise in general.

Getting an STI isn't as simple as taking some medicine and moving on with your life – if not properly treated, they can have long term impacts on your and your partner's health. Adding antibiotic resistance into the mix makes the impact on your life even greater.

There are simple steps you can take to reduce your risk of gonorrhoea and other STIs. Use condoms consistently and correctly with all new or casual partners, test regularly for STIs and if you have any symptoms such as unusual discharge, don't have sex until you are tested.

STI testing is free and available through online self-sampling services or by contacting local sexual health services. UKHSA actively monitors, and acts on, the spread of antibiotic resistance in gonorrhoea and potential treatment failures and, when ceftriaxone resistant strains are identified, implements prompt public health action to limit further spread.

Typical symptoms of gonorrhoea include a thick green or yellow discharge from the vagina or penis, pain when urinating, pain and discomfort in the rectum

and, in women and other people with a uterus or ovaries, lower abdominal pain and bleeding between periods. However, often people infected with gonorrhoea will have no symptoms, especially for infections in the throat, vagina or rectum.

Treating gonorrhoea as soon as possible is very important as it can lead to serious long-term health problems; in women and other people with a uterus or ovaries, gonorrhoea can spread to the reproductive organs and cause [pelvic inflammatory disease \(PID\)](#).

PID can lead to long-term pelvic pain, [ectopic pregnancy](#) and [infertility](#). In men and other people with testes, it can cause a painful infection in the testicles and prostate gland, which may lead to reduced fertility in some cases.

You can read more about gonorrhoea on the [NHS website](#).