



Factsheet: Non-specific Urethritis (NSU)

What is Non-specific Urethritis?

NSU is an infection of the urethra caused by various germs and bacteria. Urethritis is inflammation (pain, redness and/or swelling) of the urethra (the tube where urine comes out). The diagnosis of NSU is more commonly made in men than women. NSU is often caused by another sexually transmitted infection (such as Chlamydia or Gonorrhoea), however, sometimes there are other causes, for example, urinary tract infections.

How is it transmitted?

- Unprotected anal, oral and vaginal sex.
- Intimate/close genital contact.

[Note: not all cases of NSU are caused by sexual contact].

What are the symptoms?

A person can have NSU and not have any symptoms.

If a person does have symptoms, they may include:

- Abnormal discharge from the penis/vagina.
- Burning or pain when weeing/urinating.
- Itching, irritation, or tenderness.
- Underwear stain.

The NSU Test

As well as checking for inflammation, the test includes a urine test or taking a swab from the infected area.

How is it treated?

NSU can be treated and cured with specific antibiotics.

If NSU is left untreated it can sometimes lead to other medical issues and complications such as possible reduced fertility, and it can still be passed on to sexual partner(s).



Prevention

Not all cases of NSU are caused by having sex. The sexual transmission of NSU can be prevented through safer sex practices:

- When sexually active, always use condoms and/or dental dams for vaginal, anal and oral sex, and for rimming.
- Get tested and treated, if required.
- Do not share sex toys, [or if toys are shared, use condoms on the sex toy, change the condom between people, remove it after use, and thoroughly clean the toy before using it again].
- When using fingers or hands for penetration (anally and/or vaginally), use latex gloves or finger cots, particularly if there are visible cuts or broken skin on the hands, and do not share fingers (i.e. do not use fingers on yourself that you have already used on your partner where infected fluids could be passed on).
- Make informed decisions: talk to sexual partner(s) about STI testing and using condoms, and get informed about the risks.
- Mutual monogamy (both partners test for STIs and don't have any, and both partners agree to only have sex with each other, and keep it that way!).

Join the Just Carry One Campaign and promote safer sex:

www.facebook.com/justcarryone



www.hivireland.ie