

## CENTER FOR DISEASE PREVENTION & CONTROL

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Public Health  
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### Gonorrhea Treatment Information Sheet Important Information About **Your** Health

(This Treatment Information Sheet is intended for sex partners of persons with Gonorrhea)

#### **Why am I getting this medicine (Cefixime)?**

Your sex partner has been treated for gonorrhea. Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) that you can get from having sex (oral, vaginal or anal) with a person who already has it. You may have been exposed to gonorrhea infection. Gonorrhea is easily treated with the medicine cefixime (also known as Suprax). Your sex partner has given you a cefixime (a pill) medicine, which was given to your sex partner by a doctor or other medical provider to treat YOU.

#### **What is Gonorrhea and what are the symptoms?**

Gonorrhea is a curable sexually transmitted infection (STI). It is caused by a bacteria called *Neisseria gonorrhoea*, and you can get from having sex with a person who already has it. Many people with gonorrhea do not know they have it because they have no symptoms and feel fine. Some people DO NOT experience or notice any signs or symptoms at all.

#### **Symptoms of Gonorrhea**

People who have male genitals – may notice a discharge (drip) from the penis, pain or discomfort while urinating (peeing), or pain or swelling in their testicles.

People who have female genitals – may notice an unusual vaginal discharge; pain or burning when urinating (peeing); increased need to urinate (pee); pain during sex; bleeding between periods or after sex; lower abdominal (belly); or pelvic (hip) pain or cramps. People who have a uterus and ovaries can become infertile (unable to have children) if they don't get treated.

People who receive anal sex can develop rectal pain, rectal discharge, and/or bleeding.

#### **Why should I take this medicine?**

You need treatment so you do not develop serious health problems, re-infect your sex partner(s) or pass the infection to others. Even if you were diagnosed with and treated for an STI in the past, you can get it again. If left untreated, STIs can:

- Cause severe pain in the abdomen (belly) or rectum (butt)
- Cause infertility (inability to get pregnant)
- Cause painful or swollen testicles
- Increase the risk of having a tubal (ectopic) pregnancy
- Make it more likely to get or spread HIV
- Cause premature labor, low infant birth weight or other harm to a fetus

### **Will this medicine cure all STIs?**

No, your medicine will not cure all STIs, but it will treat gonorrhea, which is the same STI that your partner was treated for. If you have STI symptoms, call your health care provider or the Rockland County Department of Health (RCDOH) Sexual Health Clinic at **845-364-3771**.

### **How can I protect myself?**

There are a few things that you can do to protect yourself from getting chlamydia or other STIs:

- 1) **Get tested for other STDs.** Even though the medicine that you have cures chlamydia, it does not cure all other STDs. Call the RCDOH Sexual health clinic at (845) 364-3771 or your health care provider to find out how to get tested for other STIs, including HIV.
- 2) **Take the medicine.** It is important to finish all the pills prescribed. If chlamydia is not treated, it can lead to serious health risks.
- 3) **Wait to have sex.** After you and your partner(s) each take the medicine, wait at least 7 days before you have any sex. This gives the medicine time to work. If you have sex too soon, you may re-infect yourself or your partner(s).
- 4) **Use a condom or dental dam.** When used correctly, latex or polyurethane condoms and dental dams can greatly reduce the risk of getting STIs, including chlamydia. If you are infected with HIV, or may have been exposed to HIV, you should contact your health care provider for a complete exam, including testing for STIs and HIV.

### **You received a prescription for EPT for Cefixime. Please read below instructions BEFORE to taking CEFIXIME:**

#### **SAFETY OF CEFIXIME:**

Cefixime is a very safe antibiotic. However, **DO NOT take it if any of the following are true:**

- You have female genitalia and have lower belly pain, pain during sex, vomiting or fever.
- You have male genitalia and have pain or swelling in the testicles or fever.
- You have had a bad reaction, rash, breathing problems, or allergic reaction after taking other antibiotics. People who are allergic to some antibiotics may also be allergic to other types. If you do have allergies to antibiotics, you should be examined by your medical provider before taking this medicine.
- You have a serious long-term illness, such as kidney, heart or liver disease.
- If you are currently taking another prescription medication, including medicine for diabetes, consult your pharmacist or medical provider before taking the medication to ask about drug interactions.
- If any of these circumstances exist, or if you are not sure, do not take the cefixime. Instead, you should talk to your doctor or medical provider as soon as possible. Your doctor or medical provider will find the best treatment for you.
- **WARNINGS:**
  - If you performed oral sex on someone who was infected with gonorrhea, the medicine may not work as well. You need to see a doctor to get stronger medicine.
  - If you do not take medicine to cure gonorrhea, you can get very sick. If you are a woman, you may get chronic (long-term) pelvic pain and might not be able to have children.
  - If you are pregnant, seek medical evaluation before taking the medicine.

## **DIRECTIONS FOR TAKING CEFIXIME**

- Take the medicine by mouth. Do not share it with others.
- DO take the pill given to you, cefixime, by mouth with a full glass of water, with or without food. By taking the pill with food, you are less likely to get an upset stomach, and the medicine will work better in your body. You need to take the medicine you were given to be cured.
- DO NOT take antacids (such as Tums, Rolaids, or Maalox) for one hour before or two hours after taking the cefixime pill.
- DO NOT give this medicine to others. It is intended for sex partners of persons who have gonorrhea.

## **SIDE EFFECTS OF CEFIXIME:**

Possible side effects of taking this medicine include:

- Slightly upset stomach
- Diarrhea
- Dizziness
- Vaginal yeast infection

These are well-known side effects and are not serious. Very few people experience any of these problems.

## **ALLERGIC REACTIONS:**

Allergic reactions are rare. If you have ever had a bad allergic reaction, rash, breathing problems or other allergic reactions with cefixime or other antibiotics, consult your medical provider or pharmacy before taking this medicine.

Possible serious allergic reactions include:

- Difficulty breathing/tightness in the chest
- Closing of your throat
- Swelling of your lips or tongue
- Hives (bumps or welts on your skin that itch intensely)

**\*\*If you experience any of these allergic reactions, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room immediately!\*\***

## **RESUMING SEXUAL ACTIVITY**

STOP having sex with others until you take the medicine, and DO NOT have sex for the next 7 days after taking the medicine. It takes 7 days for the medicine to work in your body and cure gonorrhea. If you have sex without a condom during the 7 days after taking the medicine, you could still pass the infection to your sex partners, even if you have no symptoms. While using condoms correctly and consistently is effective, the safest way to make sure you do not pass this infection on to anyone else is to NOT have sex for 7 days.

If you have any questions about cefixime (Suprax) or gonorrhea, please call us at RCDOH Sexual Health Clinic at **845-364-3771**.

## **TO INFORM OTHER SEX PARTNERS OF YOUR POSSIBLE CONDITION:**

- Work with us at the Rockland County Department of Health (RCDOH) Sexual Health Clinic to inform your sex partners of possible. Call us at **845-364-3771**, exposure to an infection, so that they may also be properly tested and/or treated.
- **If you have access to the internet, and want to send your sex partners an anonymous or confidential message:** [www.tellyourpartner.org](http://www.tellyourpartner.org)