



COUNTY OF IMPERIAL  

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**PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

July 20, 2021

**HEALTH ALERT**

**Increase in Disseminated Gonococcal infections**

Since late 2020, there has been an increase statewide in reports of disseminated gonococcal infections, an uncommon but severe complication of untreated gonorrhea. In Imperial County, one confirmed case was reported in June 2020, and three cases including two confirmed and one probable were reported from April to June 2021.

Disseminated gonococcal infection (DGI) occurs when the sexually transmitted pathogen *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* invades the bloodstream and spreads to distant sites in the body, leading to clinical manifestations such as septic arthritis, polyarthralgia, tenosynovitis, petechial/pustular skin lesions, bacteremia, or on rare occasions endocarditis or meningitis.

If there is clinical suspicion for DGI, nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT) and culture specimens from urogenital and extragenital (e.g., pharyngeal and rectal) mucosal sites should be collected and processed for testing, in addition to NAAT and culture specimens from disseminated sites of infection such as skin, synovial fluid, blood, or cerebrospinal fluid. All *N. gonorrhoeae* isolates in DGI cases should be tested for antimicrobial susceptibility, which requires culture.

Management of DGI cases should be guided by the [Gonococcal Infections - 2015 STD Treatment Guidelines \(cdc.gov\)](#). Hospitalization and consultation with an infectious disease specialist are recommended for initial therapy.

Report all laboratory-confirmed and clinically suspected cases of DGI to the local Public Health Department within 24 hours of identification. Clinical consultation for DGI management is available through [STD Clinical Consultation Network](#).

Health-care providers are reminded to do routine screening for sexually transmitted diseases in females who are under 25 years of age and/or pregnant, in men who have sex with men, and anyone with HIV infection.

For more information, go to:

- California Department of Public Health STD Control Branch Gonorrhea page:
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). DGI Case Reporting Form.

Available at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/std/program/outbreakresources/DGICaseReportingForm-508.pdf>

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