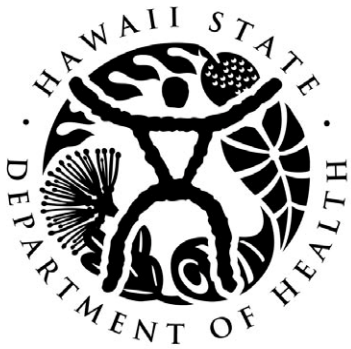

Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) for Gonorrhea

(Antibiotic treatment: Azithromycin, 1 gram + Cefixime, 400 milligrams - both taken as one dose)

PLEASE READ THIS VERY CAREFULLY

Why am I getting this sheet?

You have had sex with a person who was recently diagnosed with, and treated for, a bacterial infection called gonorrhea. That person may have had the infection when you had sex. Many people have no symptoms of infection. The bacteria can still cause important harm within a person's body even when there are no symptoms. Gonorrhea is easily cured with proper antibiotics.

If I have an infection, should I have symptoms?

You could have gonorrhea and have no signs or symptoms of infection, yet still be able to pass the infection to another person. On the other hand, you might have symptoms:

- Men may notice a discharge from the penis or rectum; pain or discomfort while urinating ("making shi-shi"); pain or itching in the rectum; feeling the need to have a bowel movement ("BM") when no feces ("poop") is present; or pain or swelling in their testicles ("balls").

- Women might notice an unusual vaginal discharge or discharge from the rectum; pain or burning when urinating ("making shi-shi"); pain or itching in the rectum; feeling the need to have a bowel movement ("BM") when no feces ("poop") is present; pain during sex; bleeding between periods or after sex; or lower abdominal or pelvic ("belly") pain or cramping.

What is "EPT," Expedited Partner Therapy? Is this the best thing for me?

The purpose of EPT is to provide safe, effective treatment to the partners of people diagnosed with infection, when these partners are unable to seek medical care themselves. The best thing for you to do is get checked by your doctor. Your EPT is for gonorrhea infection only. You could have other kinds of infection at the same time. If you are not able to see a doctor within one week, you should use the EPT medicine provided to you for your own treatment only. With this sheet, you have been given antibiotics or a prescription for antibiotics. If your insurance does not cover the cost of the medicine, you will have to pay for this at the pharmacy.

You should be tested by a doctor one week after this treatment to see whether the infection has been completely cured. The best treatment is an injectable antibiotic ("shot") called ceftriaxone (trade name, Rocephin®) given at your doctor's office. Your treatment is not a shot, but pills. Sexually-transmitted infections that are not completely treated pose a risk of harm to you, your sexual partners, and the partners of those partners.

Is the EPT medication safe for me?

Even though your EPT is very safe, you should NOT take this medicine without first talking to your doctor, if any of the following are true:

- You have ever had a bad reaction, rash or allergy to Azithromycin (Zithromax®), Cefixime (Suprax®), Cephalosporins, Clarithromycin (Biaxin®), Erythromycin, Penicillins or other related medications.
- You know you have had an allergic reaction to antibiotics, but cannot remember which one.
- You are female and having lower belly pain, pain with sex, vomiting or fever.
- You are male and having pain or swelling in the testicle ("balls") or fever.
- You are pregnant. Although you still need treatment, call your doctor or clinic as soon as possible.
- You have a serious illness such as kidney, heart or liver disease.
- You are taking prescription medicine, especially for heart disease or serious mental illness.

Take your EPT medicine as one dose: take all pills one right after the other. Drink plenty of water when you take the medicine. This medicine can cause an upset stomach, diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting in some individuals. This should not last long. If you become concerned about these side effects, call your doctor. Taking the pills with food can decrease the chance of having an upset stomach.

If you develop an itchy rash ("hives"), call your doctor's office, you may be allergic to this medicine.

If you start having a hard time breathing or a swollen mouth, tongue or throat, this may be a serious allergic reaction and you should go to the emergency room.

Can I still have sex while the medicine is working? What about my sexual partners?

Do not have sex for the next 7 days after taking your EPT medicine, because it takes 7 days for the medicine to cure the infection. As mentioned before, you should be tested in one week to be sure your infection has been cured and tested again in 3 months to check for the possibility of reinfection.

You may have unknowingly shared gonorrhea or other sexually transmitted infections with others. Let your sex partners during the past 60 days know about this, so they can get checked and receive any needed treatment. Sharing this information can be a powerful way to limit the spread of infection and the harm that infections can cause.

If I have additional questions, who do I ask?

If you have questions about any of the information presented here, please contact your doctor or the health department. Health department specialists in the diagnosis and treatment sexually-transmitted infections, and in notification of one's sexual partners, can be reached through the Diamond Head Health Center's STD Clinic on O`ahu at 733-9281.