



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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March 12, 2024

**MEDICAL ADVISORY: GONORRHEA WITH REDUCED SUSCEPTIBILITY TO
CEPHALOSPORINS DETECTED IN HAWAII**

- DOH has identified 5 cases of gonorrhea with reduced susceptibility to ceftriaxone and cefixime since November 2023.
- CDC-recommended treatment for gonorrhea of 500 mg ceftriaxone IM is still effective.
- DOH urges providers to include testing of extragenital sites (oropharyngeal and/or rectal) if these sites are exposed.
- DOH recommends test of cure for all instances of pharyngeal infection.
- Suspected cases of gonorrhea treatment failure should be reported to DOH as soon as possible.

The Hawaii State Department of Health has recently identified five *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* isolates with reduced susceptibility to cephalosporins (ceftriaxone and/or cefixime). Of the five isolates, one demonstrated reduced susceptibility to cefixime and four demonstrated reduced susceptibility to both ceftriaxone and cefixime.

The 5 case subjects are all male with female sex partners. Linkages between the cases have not been identified. All were successfully treated with ceftriaxone and have had resolution of symptoms.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Treatment

At this time, **standard treatment for gonorrhea of 500mg ceftriaxone IM for persons weighing <150kg is effective and recommended (1 gram IM for persons weighing ≥150kg). If chlamydia has not been ruled out, add one week of doxycycline 100 mg PO twice a day.**

Follow-up

- All persons who are diagnosed with gonorrhea should be **screened for other STIs**, including chlamydia, syphilis, and HIV. Detailed information on STI screening can be found in CDC's STI Screening Recommendations.
- A **test of cure** should be performed 7-14 days after initial treatment for all cases of pharyngeal gonorrhea.
- **Rescreen** with NAAT to rule out reinfection 3 months after treatment for all patients who have been treated for gonorrhea. If retesting at 3 months is not possible, retest whenever the person next seeks medical care <12 months after initial treatment.

Evaluate and treat the patient's sex partner(s) during the previous 60 days.

Hawaii's Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) law allows health care providers to offer treatment for gonorrhea and chlamydia to partners of their patients without medical examination of those partners.

Suspected Gonorrhea Treatment Failure

Remain vigilant for patients not responding to CDC-recommended treatment. The majority of suspected treatment failures in the United States are likely to be reinfections rather than actual treatment failures. Detailed information about suspected treatment failure can be found in CDC's STI Treatment Guidelines.

When symptoms persist after treatment and the healthcare provider suspects treatment failure:

- Report the suspected treatment failure to DOH within 24 hours by calling the Harm Reduction Services Branch at [808-733-9281, option 1](tel:808-733-9281).
- For advice about obtaining cultures, antimicrobial susceptibility testing, and treatment, providers should consult Diamond Head Health Center STI/HIV Clinic at [808-733-9281, option 2](tel:808-733-9281).

When symptoms persist after treatment and the healthcare provider suspects a cause other than treatment failure (such as reinfection, inadequate treatment, or incomplete treatment):

- Collect specimens for NAAT and culture testing simultaneously from all anatomic sites of exposure before retreatment.
- Treat the patient in accordance with CDC's gonorrhea treatment guidelines without waiting for these laboratory results.

RESOURCES

- DOH Harm Reduction Services Branch <https://health.hawaii.gov/harmreduction/>
- 2021 CDC STI Treatment Guidelines <https://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment-guidelines/>
- 2021 CDC STI Screening Recommendations <https://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment-guidelines/screening-recommendations.htm>
- Hawaii's Expedited Partner Therapy Law https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol10_Ch0436-0474/HRS0453/HRS_0453-0051.htm
- CDC Drug-Resistant Gonorrhea page <https://www.cdc.gov/std/gonorrhea/drug-resistant/>
- NNPTC STD Clinical Consultation Service <https://www.stdccn.org/>
- AAFP Screening for Sexually Transmitted Infections Practice Manual https://www.aafp.org/dam/AAFP/documents/patient_care/sti/hops19-sti-manual.pdf

Sincerely,



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