

Non-Specific Urethritis (NSU)

Urethritis, infection of the urethra (the urinary canal leading from the bladder to the outside of the body), which is not caused by gonorrhoea or *Chlamydia* infection is called non-specific urethritis. Gonorrhoea and *Chlamydia* infection are by far the commonest cause of urethritis, but a number of other organisms can cause this condition. It is most commonly diagnosed in men.

In men, symptoms may include a watery discharge from the penis and a burning sensation in the penis when urinating. In women, pain occurs when urinating and discharge may not be noticed. These symptoms occur to varying degrees.

The diagnosis is usually made when symptoms are present but tests for gonorrhoea and *Chlamydia* are negative. There are no tests for most of the other organisms which can cause this condition and it is likely there are some causes which have not yet been identified. Some of the likely causes are bacteria such as *Ureaplasma urealyticum* and *Mycoplasma genitalium*, parasites such as *Trichomonas vaginalis* and viruses such as herpes simplex virus.

Most infections are sexually transmitted.

Incubation period

(time between becoming infected and developing symptoms)

Variable, usually between 2 – 35 days.

Infectious period

(time during which an infected person can infect others)

Until antibiotic therapy has been completed.

Treatment

Effective antibiotic treatment is available on prescription by a doctor. Continued or recurring symptoms may require referral for specialist treatment.

Control of spread

- > No unprotected sex until treatment completed.
- > Practise safer sex – use condoms.
- > Treat sexual partners (who may be without symptoms).
- > Testing to exclude other sexually transmitted infections is advisable.

> Avoiding Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI)

Useful website

- > **Clinic 275**
<http://www.stdservices.on.net/std/>