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# Centre for Disease Control

NT HEALTH

## Public Health Alert

Issued: 1 October 2024  
Issued to: Health staff, NT wide

### Penicillinase-producing *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* (PPNG) and treatment recommendations for gonorrhoea

#### Summary

- An outbreak of penicillin-resistant gonorrhoea (PPNG) in the Northern Territory (NT) has been ongoing since January 2023.
- When *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* produces the enzyme called penicillinase it is no longer susceptible to penicillin treatment and is called PPNG.
- Intermediate penicillin resistance has also been found in the NT and is not detectable on PPNG PCR tests. Susceptibility testing of cultures is needed to exclude this resistance, but samples from the remote NT are frequently not able to be cultured due to long delays in transport to laboratories.
- Therefore all uncomplicated gonococcal infections across the NT should now be treated with ceftriaxone based treatment as below **even when PPNG is not detected on PCR**. Patients are at an increased risk of additional antibiotic resistance if penicillin based treatment continues.

#### Treatment

- **All cases of suspected or confirmed** uncomplicated genital and anorectal gonorrhoea should be treated with:
  - **Ceftriaxone 500mg in 1.8mL 1% lignocaine IM single dose AND**
  - **Azithromycin 1g oral single dose**
- Collect **samples for culture and antibiotic sensitivity and testing for other STIs** including serology for HIV and syphilis.
- **Retest 3 months after treatment** as risk of reinfection is high.
- Amoxicillin, probenecid and azithromycin combinations (**ZAP packs**) are **no longer considered effective 1st line treatment** of gonorrhoea in the NT.

#### Contact tracing

**Urgent contact tracing** is needed. Sexual contacts in the previous 2 months should:

- Have a **full STI screen** (consider including a swab or urine for culture) AND
- Be **treated** on the same day **with ceftriaxone and azithromycin** as above.

#### Contact & advice

- Clinic 34 is the NT's specialist sexual health service and their staff can provide further clinical advice if needed. Contact [clinic34.ths@nt.gov.au](mailto:clinic34.ths@nt.gov.au) or via your local CDC unit.

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