

# ANTIBIOTIC-RESISTANT GONORRHEA (ARGC) QUESTIONS & ANSWERS FOR DISEASE INTERVENTION SPECIALISTS

## Question 1

How does the CDC define a gonorrhea "alert" case?

### \*Alert MIC Criteria

Ceftriaxone MIC  $\geq 0.125$   $\mu\text{g/ml}$   
Cefixime MIC  $\geq 0.25$   $\mu\text{g/m}$

A gonorrhea "alert" case indicates a potentially concerning level of reduced susceptibility to an antibiotic of interest. An alert case does not necessarily indicate a treatment failure. While there have been alert cases in the U.S., as of the drafting of this document (May 2023,) there have not been treatment failures due to an alert case.

## Question 2

How does the CDC define minimum inhibitory concentration (MIC) values?

The MIC values indicate the reduced susceptibility bacteria have to a specific antibiotic. Gonorrhea cultures test for Ceftriaxone and Cefixime MIC values.

### Question 3

Can patients be told they have an “alert” case of gonorrhea?

Patients should not be told they have an “alert” case of gonorrhea. The term is for internal use only

### Question 4

What is the timeframe for eliciting sexual partners?

All partners within the last 2 months (60 days) since symptom onset (or since diagnosis if asymptomatic).

### Question 5

Is it common for patients to report not having symptoms by the time they’re interviewed?

Yes. Gonorrhea is often asymptomatic, particularly at the pharynx (throat) or rectal sites. Even if initially symptomatic, the DIS interview may take place after treatment has been administered and people are no longer having symptoms.



## Question 6

What is antibiotic susceptibility testing (AST) and how is it related to antibiotic resistant gonorrhea?

Antibiotic susceptibility testing (AST), is a laboratory testing process to determine which antibiotics bacteria (e.g., gonorrhea) are susceptible (or not susceptible) to. This can help medical providers determine the correct dosage and medication for effective treatment.

## Question 7

How do you let a person know they may have antibiotic resistant gonorrhea?

It is important to remember, informing a person of this type of infection can be alarming. When discussing the potential diagnosis with a patient, let them know further testing was performed and that they may need more antibiotics and testing to ensure their infection is cured.

## Question 8



Are people aware that gonorrhea has become resistant to antibiotics?

Most people are not aware that over time, gonorrhea has developed resistance to most of the antibiotics that have been used to treat it. It is essential for a DIS to take a moment to explain how gonorrhea has become resistant to nearly all the antibiotics used for its treatment. We are currently down to one last recommended and effective treatment regimen for gonorrhea. A place to start is the CDPH [Antibiotic-Resistant Gonorrhea Center of Excellence treatment timeline](#).

## Question 9

What is the current recommendation for treating gonorrhea?

The current CDC recommendation for uncomplicated gonorrhea is a single 500 mg intramuscular (IM) dose of ceftriaxone (for persons weighing < 150kg) and a single 1 g IM dose of ceftriaxone (for persons weighing ≥ 150kg)  
Check out the [CDC Treatments Page](#)

## Question 10

How do we ensure people are fully treated and no longer have gonorrhea?

People with antibiotic-resistant gonorrhea or gonorrhea with reduced susceptibility to recommended treatment should get a test-of-cure (TOC). A TOC is follow-up testing to be sure the infection was treated successfully.

## Question 11

What is the difference in test-of-cure time frames for urogenital/rectal vs pharyngeal (throat) sites?

For test-of-cure, people with urogenital or rectal site gonorrhea infection should be reevaluated and tested 7 days after treatment and people with a pharyngeal (throat) infection should be reevaluated and tested 14 days after treatment.

## Question 12

Where can I find more information on gonorrhea and ARGC?

Helpful information about gonorrhea and antibiotic-resistant gonorrhea can be found here: [CDC Gonorrhea Webpage](#), [CDC Antibiotic-Resistant Gonorrhea Webpage](#), and [CDPH Antibiotic-Resistant Gonorrhea Center of Excellence](#), and the [CDPH ARGC patient education flyer](#).

## Question 13

How can I report an ARGC case or a case with suspected gonorrhea treatment failure?

Visit the [CDPH Gonorrhea Treatment Failure Protocol for Local Health Departments for reporting information](#). Inquiries can also be sent to [stdcb\\_argc@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:stdcb_argc@cdph.ca.gov)