

Ministry of Health

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April 3, 2023

MEMORANDUM

**TO: Public Health Units and Healthcare Workers
Providing Sexual Health Care**

**FROM: Dr. Kieran Michael Moore
Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health**

RE: Sexual Health Services

I am writing to share some important information regarding ceftriaxone non-susceptible gonorrhea in Ontario, and to provide recommendations to support your clinical care of patients with symptoms consistent with gonorrhea infection.

As you may know, recent international reports, including from [Europe](#) and the [USA](#), have identified a multidrug-resistant strain of *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*. Through routine provincial disease surveillance activities, an Ontario patient with no known travel history was recently identified as having a gonorrhea infection with a similar resistance pattern, i.e. reduced susceptibility to ceftriaxone and cefixime, as well as resistance to ciprofloxacin, penicillin, and tetracycline, suggesting circulation of this multi-drug resistant strain within Ontario.

In this context, I recommend:

- For all patients with suspected gonorrhea infection, collect swabs for *N. gonorrhoeae* culture as well as specimens for NAAT testing for *N. gonorrhoeae* from all potentially exposed sites (e.g., urethral/cervical, pharyngeal, rectal). We recommend that you collect both types of specimens for all patients given that NAAT is more sensitive and culture allows assessment for drug sensitivity. Swabs should be received within 48 hours if possible but will be accepted by Public Health Ontario Laboratory up to 72 hours after collection. For additional details on specimen collection and submission, please see the Public Health Ontario [Test Information Index](#).

As per the [Canadian Guidelines on Sexually Transmitted Infections](#) (CGSTI), test of cure is currently recommended for **ALL** positive cases of *N. gonorrhoeae* at **all positive sites**. Culture is the preferred method for test of cure and should be performed 3-7 days after completion of treatment. If culture is not available, test of cure by NAAT will also be accepted and should be performed at 2-3 weeks post-treatment. For any questions related to testing, please contact Public Health Ontario's Customer Service Centre by phone: 416-235-6556 or 1-877-604-4567 (Toll Free) or by email: customerservicecentre@oahpp.ca.

- If you identify any patients with multi-drug resistant gonorrhoea infection, please contact your local Public Health Unit regarding case management and to support notification and follow up of contacts.

I would also like to remind you of current CGSTI guidance to re-screen persons with gonorrhoea infection at 6 months post-treatment or else at the first follow up appointment within 12 months, given risks of re-infection due to ongoing or repeat exposure.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kieran Michael Moore, MD, CCFP(EM), FCFP, MPH, DTM&H, FRCPC, FCAHS
Chief Medical Officer of Health and Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Health