

New York State Department of Health

Granuloma Inguinale

Last Reviewed: November 2006

What is granuloma inguinale?

Granuloma inguinale is a chronic bacterial infection of the genital region, generally regarded to be sexually transmitted.

Who gets granuloma inguinale?

Granuloma inguinale is a relatively rare disease occurring in people living in tropical and subtropical areas. It occurs more frequently in males. In the United States, while homosexuals are at greater risk, it is relatively rare in heterosexual partners of those infected.

How is granuloma inguinale spread?

Granuloma inguinale is thought to be spread by sexual contact with an infected individual.

What are the symptoms of granuloma inguinale?

The disease begins with the appearance of lumps or blisters in the genital area. The blister becomes a slowly enlarging open sore.

How soon do symptoms appear?

The incubation period appears to be between eight and 80 days after infection.

When and for how long is a person able to spread granuloma inguinale?

Granuloma inguinale is communicable as long as the infected person remains untreated and bacteria from lesions are present.

Does past infection with granuloma inguinale make a person immune?

Past infection does not make a person immune. Susceptibility is variable. There is no evidence of natural resistance.

What is the treatment for granuloma inguinale?

There are several antibiotics that will effectively cure granuloma inguinale. Response to the antibiotic should be evident within seven days and total healing usually occurs within three to five weeks.

What complications can result from granuloma inguinale?

If left untreated, granuloma inguinale can result in extensive destruction of genital organs and may also spread to other parts of the body.

How can the spread of granuloma inguinale be prevented?

- Limit the number of your sex partners.
- Use a condom.
- Carefully wash the genitals after sexual relations.
- If you think you are infected, avoid any sexual contact and visit your local sexually transmitted disease (STD) clinic, a hospital or your doctor.
- Notify all sexual contacts immediately so they can obtain medical care.

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