

Sexually Transmitted Infections

Pelvic Inflammatory Disease

What is pelvic inflammatory disease?

Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) is a serious infection of a woman's reproductive system. Most cases of PID are caused by the sexually transmitted infections (STIs) chlamydia (*kluh-mid-ee-uh*) and gonorrhea (*gon-uh-ree-uh*).

Gonorrhea & Chlamydia Symptoms

Men

- Pain when urinating (peeing)
- Pus from the penis

Women

- Abnormal discharge from the vagina
- Lower abdominal pain
- Abnormal vaginal bleeding
- Pain during intercourse

Many men, and 4 of 5 women, have no signs of an infection, so they do not get treated. That means, gonorrhea and chlamydia germs continue to spread inside the body.

In women, the germs move from the vagina to the uterus and the fallopian tubes, causing pelvic inflammatory disease. PID can happen suddenly with painful symptoms or develop slowly with hidden symptoms.

Some symptoms are:

- Pain in lower abdomen, may be severe
- High temperature
- Strong smell from the vagina
- Discharge from vagina is different from normal discharge
- Flu-like symptoms - chills, fever, aches
- Pain in the lower back
- Pain during or after intercourse
- Bleeding from vagina that is not her period

If you think you have PID see a healthcare professional or visit an STI clinic.

Treatment

Antibiotics are used to treat PID. The sooner you get treated, the less likely you will have problems. In some cases, PID can be severe enough that patients need to be admitted to hospital. Take all medication and return to the doctor or STI clinic for a follow-up test to make sure the infection is cured.

Complications

PID can cause serious, even life-threatening, illness and should be treated immediately.

The main complications from PID are:

- Infertility
- Increased chance of tubal pregnancy or a pregnancy where the fertilized egg grows outside of the uterus
- Permanent, long lasting or chronic pelvic pain

If you miss your period and think you are pregnant, but have a sharp, continuing pain in the side of the abdomen, see your doctor or go to the hospital.

In men, gonorrhea and chlamydia can block the small tubes that connect the testicles with the penis. Sperm cannot pass and can lead to sterility.

Early treatment

PID can cause serious, even life-threatening, illness and needs to be treated immediately.

An intra-uterine device (IUD) can increase the chances of getting PID. See your doctor regularly.

A woman with more than 1 sex partner has a higher chance of getting a sexually transmitted infection (STI).

Condoms and foam help protect men and women against AIDS and other STIs.



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