

Trichomoniasis

What is trichomoniasis?

Trichomoniasis is a sexually transmitted disease or infection (also called an STD or STI). It can be treated and does not usually cause any serious damage. However, it can increase your risk of getting other sexually transmitted diseases or infections, particularly HIV. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS, which is a life-threatening disease. Also, if a pregnant woman has trichomoniasis, the disease can cause the baby to be born early or have a low birth weight.

What is the cause?

The infection is caused by a parasite called *Trichomonas vaginalis*. It is usually passed from person to person during oral, vaginal, or anal sex. The infection can spread to others even when you don't have symptoms.

What are the symptoms?

You may not have any symptoms.

When women have symptoms, they may include:

- Frothy, green or yellow vaginal discharge, often with a strong odor
- Itching around the vaginal opening
- Redness and soreness of the vagina
- Burning during urination
- Pain in the vagina during sex
- Pain in the lower belly

When men have symptoms, they may include:

- Irritation inside the penis
- Clear, yellow, or green drainage from the penis
- Slight burning after urination or sex

How is it diagnosed?

Your healthcare provider will ask about your symptoms and sexual and medical history and examine you. Tests usually include a test of fluid from the opening of the penis or vagina.

How is it treated?

The infection is treated with medicine that will kill the parasite. Don't drink any alcohol while you are taking the medicine or for 2 days after you finish the medicine. Drinking alcohol while you are taking the medicine may cause severe nausea and vomiting.

For most people, the symptoms go away less than 1 week after treatment.

How can I take care of myself?

- Take your medicine for as long as your healthcare provider prescribes, even if you feel better. If you stop taking the medicine too soon, you may not kill all of the parasites and you may get sick again. If you are pregnant, ask if there are any special precautions you should take.
- Take nonprescription pain medicine.
- Tell everyone with whom you have had sex in the last 3 months about your infection. Or you can ask the clinic staff to tell them. They will not use your name. Your sexual contacts need to be treated even if they don't have any symptoms.
- Don't have sex until both you and your partner have finished all of the medicine and your provider says it's OK.
- Have a checkup every year. See your provider between checkups if you are having symptoms of vaginal infection or discomfort, especially up in the abdomen, during sex.
- Ask your healthcare provider:
 - How and when you will hear your test results
 - What other STDs you should be tested for
 - How long it will take to recover
 - What activities you should avoid and when you can return to normal activities
 - When it is safe to have sex again
 - How to take care of yourself at home
 - What symptoms or problems you should watch for and what to do if you have them
- Make sure you know when you should come back for a checkup.

How can I help prevent trichomoniasis?

- Use latex or polyurethane condoms during foreplay and every time you have vaginal, oral, or anal sex.
- Have just 1 sexual partner who is not sexually active with anyone else.
- If you have had sex and are worried that you may have been infected, see your healthcare provider even if you don't have symptoms.
- If you have been sexually assaulted, you may need to be treated to prevent sexually transmitted infections. You should have an exam within a few hours of the assault (and before showering or bathing) even if you don't want to press charges. Women can also ask about being protected from pregnancy.

Developed by RelayHealth.

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