



Factsheet: Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID)

What is Pelvic Inflammatory Disease?

Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) is a serious infection in the upper genital tract and reproductive organs (uterus/womb, fallopian tubes and ovaries) of a female. It can be sexually transmitted or naturally occurring.

PID is commonly caused by untreated chlamydia and gonorrhoea. However, other bacteria/infections in the genital tract can also lead to PID.

What are the symptoms?

A person can have PID and not have any symptoms.

Symptoms can include:

- Dull pain or tenderness in the lower stomach or lower back.
- Burning or pain when urinating.
- Nausea and vomiting.
- Bleeding between menstrual periods.
- Abnormal vaginal discharge.
- Pain during sex.
- Fever and chills.

How is it diagnosed?

- A pelvic exam, checking for:
 - Pain/tenderness in the lower stomach.
 - Tenderness of fallopian tubes and ovaries.
 - Tenderness of the cervix.
- A Pelvic ultrasound.
- Tests for chlamydia and gonorrhoea and/or other bacteria that may have infected the genital tract.

How is it treated?

- Specific antibiotics, to treat the bacteria that caused the PID.
- Surgery may be required if symptoms are severe.

Untreated PID can spread from the genital tract into the uterus (womb), the fallopian tubes and ovaries, and can sometimes lead to infertility or other health complications in women.



Prevention

The sexual transmission of PID can be prevented by safer sex practices:

- When sexually active, always use condoms and/or dental dams for vaginal, anal and oral sex.
- Get tested, and treated if required.
- Do not share sex toys, [or if toys are shared, use condoms on the sex toy, change the condom between people, remove it after use, and thoroughly clean the toy before using it again].
- When using fingers or hands for penetration (anally and/or vaginally), use latex gloves or finger cots, particularly if there are visible cuts or broken skin on the hands, and do not share fingers (i.e. do not use fingers on yourself that you have already used on your partner where infected fluids could be passed on).
- Make informed decisions: talk to sexual partner(s) about STI testing and using condoms, and get informed about the risks.
- Mutual monogamy (both partners test for STIs and don't have any, and both partners agree to only have sex with each other, and keep it that way!).

Join the Just Carry One Campaign and promote safer sex:

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