

Trichomoniasis

Information Sheet

What is it?

Trichomoniasis is a common infection caused by a one-celled parasite. The parasite can be found in both men and women. It can be treated and cured.

How is it spread?

Trichomoniasis is spread during unprotected sexual intercourse. It can also be spread by sharing damp wash cloths, towels or bathing suits with an infected person.

What are the symptoms?

Most men and many women have no symptoms. If present, symptoms may appear 4 – 20 days after contact with an infected person. Women may notice increased vaginal discharge. The discharge may be grey, yellowish-white or greenish-yellow in colour. It is usually thin, frothy, and has a foul odour. Women may also have itchiness, redness, soreness or pain during sex and when they pass urine.

Men may notice a slight clear discharge, itching of the penis and pain when they pass urine or after sex.

How is it diagnosed?

Infection may be diagnosed from a physical examination and medical history and by taking a swab of the discharge. Sometimes the infection is discovered from a woman's pap test.

What are the complications?

Trichomoniasis is not dangerous but the symptoms can be very uncomfortable.

How is it treated?

The usual treatment of Trichomoniasis is with pills called Metronidazole. The commonly known brand name for this drug is Flagyl. Women should not take Metronidazole in the first three months of pregnancy as it has been linked to birth defects and cancer in animals. Nursing mothers should not breastfeed for 24 hours after taking this drug since it can be passed through the breast milk to the baby. Alcohol can react with Metronidazole to cause severe nausea and vomiting. Do not drink alcohol during treatment. Avoid alcohol for at least two days after treatment is completed.

What about sexual partners?

All sexual partners should be treated at the same time so that they do not reinfect each other.

Is follow-up important?

Follow-up is not needed if the symptoms have disappeared.

Remember:

- ✓ Take all your medication as prescribed by your doctor or clinic.
- ✓ Avoid sex while you and your partner(s) are being treated.
- ✓ Do not drink alcohol during treatment and for two days after treatment is completed.
- ✓ Use condoms to lower the chance of getting STDs and to prevent pregnancy.
- ✓ It is possible to have more than one infection at a time, so it is important to be tested for other STDs.
- ✓ If you are taking the Birth Control Pill, use an additional form of birth control while taking antibiotics and for at least 7 days after you finish your antibiotic pills.