

Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) Fact Sheet

What is PID?

PID is an infection of a woman's reproductive organs. It usually occurs when sexually transmitted bacteria spread from your vagina to your uterus, fallopian tubes, or ovaries. It is a complication often caused by sexually transmitted infections (STIs), like chlamydia and gonorrhea. Other infections that are not sexually transmitted can also cause PID.

PID can cause the formation of scar tissue both outside and inside the fallopian tubes and lead to tubal blockage. This can make it difficult or impossible to get pregnant. PID can also cause ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy outside of the womb) and long-term pelvic/abdominal pain.

There are no tests for PID. A diagnosis is usually based on a combination of your medical history, physical exam, and other test results such as STI tests for gonorrhea and chlamydia, which are infections that can cause PID.

How do you get PID?

PID is most often caused by untreated STIs. Rarely PID can be caused by bacteria entering the reproductive tract through intrauterine device (IUD) insertion, childbirth, miscarriage, and/or abortion.

Reducing the Risk

- Test for chlamydia every year if you are sexually active and younger than 25 years of age
- Be examined by your doctor if you notice any symptoms
- If you are positive for an STI, get treated and follow **ALL** treatment instructions

Symptoms of PID

Some may not realize they have PID because symptoms may be mild, symptoms can include:

- Pain in lower abdomen
- Fever
- An unusual discharge with a bad odor from your vagina
- Pain and/or bleeding when you have sex
- Bleeding between periods

More severe symptoms include:

- Severe pain in lower abdomen
- Vomiting
- Signs of shock including fainting
- Fever with a temperature above 101 F

Treating PID

PID can be treated with antibiotics. However, treatment will not undo any damage that has already happened to your reproductive system. The longer you wait to get treated, the more likely it is that you will have complications from PID.

- While taking antibiotics, your symptoms may go away before the infection is cured. Even if symptoms go away, you should finish taking all of your medicine.
- Be sure to tell your recent sex partner (s), so they can get tested and treated for STIs, too.
- It is also very important that you and your partner(s) finish treatment before having any kind of sex so that you do not re-infect each other.

