

PELVIC INFLAMMATORY DISEASE (PID)

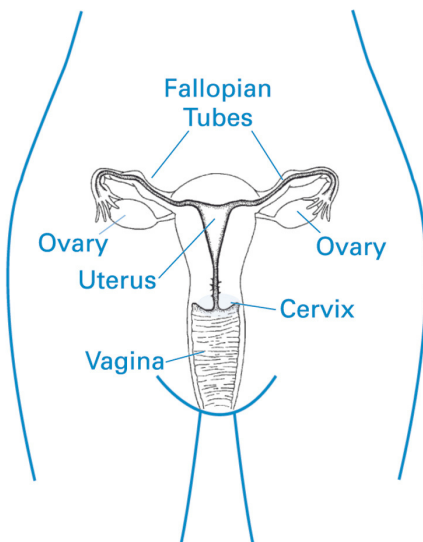
PID stands for **pelvic inflammatory disease**, a serious infection of a woman's reproductive organs, including the uterus, fallopian tubes, and ovaries. PID is a leading cause of infertility (not being able to have children) in the United States. It can also lead to life-threatening complications.

What causes PID?

The most common causes of PID are two sexually transmitted infections (STIs)—chlamydia and gonorrhea—that go untreated. Other bacteria or germs that are not passed through sex may also be a cause.

PID occurs when an infection in the cervix and vagina isn't treated right away. The infection spreads from the cervix up into the uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries, all of which can be damaged if not promptly treated. PID can develop anywhere from several days to several months after infection with an STI.

Female Reproductive Organs



OVERVIEW

- Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) is a serious infection in the upper genital tract/reproductive organs (uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries) of a female.
- PID can be caused by sexually transmitted infection or be naturally occurring. It can lead to infertility in women (unable to have children) or life-threatening complications.
- Women between ages 15 and 25 have the highest incidence of PID. In the United States, PID is the leading cause of infertility in women.

What are the symptoms of PID?

The most common symptom of PID is pain or tenderness in the lower belly. Other possible symptoms include:

- bleeding between periods
- increased changed, or unusual/smelly vaginal fluid, also called discharge
- pain during sex
- nausea and/or vomiting
- fever and chills

Many women have no symptoms or symptoms that are too mild to notice. However, PID can cause lasting damage

even when it is painless. Go to a clinic or healthcare provider right away if you notice any of these symptoms. The good news is both chlamydia and gonorrhea can be cured quickly and easily with medicine.

What are the symptoms of chlamydia and gonorrhea?

Most women with chlamydia or gonorrhea have no signs or symptoms. The only way to know if you have one of these infections is to be tested. If a woman has symptoms, they may include:

- unusual vaginal discharge (a drip from the vagina that is yellowish in color or smells bad)
- burning when urinating (peeing)
- lower belly pain during sex
- bleeding between menstrual periods

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all sexually active women under 25 get tested for chlamydia and gonorrhea each year. Getting tested and treated can help you avoid PID.

Why is PID dangerous?

PID can cause scarring in the fallopian tubes, which can lead to tubal pregnancy (a life-threatening pregnancy that occurs inside the fallopian tubes instead of the uterus, and has no chance of producing a baby) and requires emergency medical care. A woman who has had PID may have problems getting pregnant or be unable to have children at all. PID can also cause long-lasting pain.

Can PID be cured?

If found early, PID can be cured with medicine. If not treated, some cases of PID may put you in the hospital.

You may need a follow-up exam 48 to 72 hours after start of treatment to make sure the medicine is working.

Can men help prevent PID?

Yes! When men do not get PID, they can have the bacteria that causes PID in women. Men are more likely than women to have symptoms from chlamydia or gonorrhea, the infections that often cause PID. These symptoms include a pus-like discharge from the penis or pain or burning when urinating (peeing).

But like most women, some men do not have any symptoms. Since women get chlamydia or gonorrhea from their sex partners, a man can help protect his female partner by using condoms consistently and telling her right away if his healthcare provider says he has an infection. Getting treated right away can help keep a woman from having serious damage to her reproductive organs.

Avoid sex or use condoms for sex until sex partners are completely cured. All partners must be treated to completely get rid of the infection.

Learn More

Learn more about PID and STIs from the American Sexual Health Association, a trusted nonprofit organization that has advocated on behalf of those at risk for STIs for more than a century. Our websites include:

www.ashasexualhealth.org

www.iwannaknow.org

www.quierosaber.org

www.nccc-online.org

www.askexpertsnow.com

www.YESmeansTEST.org

