

Trichomoniasis

Trichomoniasis or “trich” is a common sexually transmitted disease (STD) that affects both women and men, although symptoms are more common in women.

What causes trichomoniasis?

Trichomoniasis is caused by the single-celled protozoan parasite *Trichomonas vaginalis*. The vagina is the most common site of infection in women, and the urethra is the most common site of infection in men.

How do people get trichomoniasis?

Trichomoniasis is a sexually transmitted disease that is spread through penis-to-vagina intercourse or vulva-to-vulva contact with an infected partner. Women can get the disease from infected men or women, and men usually get it only from infected women.

How common is trichomoniasis?

Trichomoniasis is one of the most common curable STDs in young, sexually active women. An estimated 5 million new cases occur each year in women and men.

What are the signs and symptoms of trichomoniasis?

Most men with trichomoniasis do not have signs or symptoms. Men with symptoms may have an irritation inside the penis, mild discharge, or slight burning after urination or ejaculation.

Many women do have signs or symptoms of infection. In these women, trichomoniasis causes a frothy, yellow-green vaginal discharge with a strong odor. The infection may also cause discomfort during intercourse and urination. Irritation and itching of the female genital area and, in rare cases, lower abdominal pain can also occur.

When do symptoms appear?

Symptoms usually appear within 5 to 28 days of exposure in women.

What are the complications of trichomoniasis?

Trichomoniasis in pregnant women may cause premature rupture of the membranes and pre-term delivery. The genital inflammation caused by trichomoniasis might also increase a woman's risk of

acquiring HIV infection if she is exposed to HIV. Trichomoniasis in a woman who is also infected with HIV can increase the chances of transmitting HIV infection to a sex partner.

How is trichomoniasis diagnosed?

To diagnose trichomoniasis, a health care provider must perform a physical examination and laboratory test. In women, a pelvic examination can reveal small red ulcerations on the vaginal wall or cervix. Laboratory tests are performed on a sample of vaginal fluid or urethral fluid to look for the disease-causing parasite. The parasite is harder to detect in men than in women.

How can trichomoniasis be prevented?

Not having sex is the best protection against trichomoniasis and other STDs. Having sex with only one uninfected partner who only has sex with you is also safe.

How can I reduce my risk of getting Trichomoniasis?

The use of latex or polyurethane condoms during vaginal intercourse, when always and correctly used, can reduce the risk of transmission of trichomoniasis. However, condoms do not provide complete protection from all STDs. Sores and lesions of other STDs on infected men and women may be present in areas not covered by the condom, resulting in transmission of infection to another person.

If you think you are infected, avoid sexual contact and see a health care provider. Any genital symptoms such as discharge or burning during urination or an unusual sore or rash should be a signal to stop having sex and to consult a health care provider immediately. If you are told you have trichomoniasis or any other STD and receive treatment, you should notify all of your recent sex partners so that they can see a health care provider and be treated.

What is the treatment for trichomoniasis?

Trichomoniasis can usually be cured with the prescription drug, metronidazole, given by mouth in a single dose. The symptoms of trichomoniasis in infected men may disappear within a few weeks without treatment. However, an infected man, even a man who has never had symptoms or whose symptoms have stopped, can continue to infect a female partner until he has been treated. Therefore, both partners should be treated at the same time to eliminate the parasite. Persons being treated for trichomoniasis should avoid sex until they and their sex partners complete treatment and have no symptoms. Metronidazole can be used by pregnant women.

Having trichomoniasis once does not protect a person from getting it again. Following successful treatment, people can still be susceptible to re-infection.

For more information about STDs, talk to your health care provider or call:

The State of Tennessee HIV/STD Hotline: 1-800-525-2437

(Monday through Friday 8:00 to 4:30 p.m. CST)

OR

The CDC National STD Hotline: 1-800-227-8922

Other Informational Links:

American Social Health Association

<http://www.ashastd.org/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/STD/>

E-Cards, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www2c.cdc.gov/ecards/index.asp?category=174>

Get Yourself Tested

<http://www.gytnow.org/>

National Institute of Health Medline

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/sexuallytransmitteddiseases.html>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

<http://www.womenshealth.gov/fag/sexually-transmitted-infections.cfm>

World Health Organization

http://www.who.int/topics/sexually_transmitted_infections/en/