

# Trichomoniasis

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Trichomoniasis, often called “Trich”, is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by a parasite. Trichomoniasis is a common curable STI found in young, sexually active women. The parasite is spread through sexual contact. Women can get it by having penis-to-vagina intercourse with an infected man or vulva-to-vulva contact with an infected woman. Men usually get it only from infected women.

Symptoms of trichomoniasis usually appear 5 to 28 days after exposure and can include (some women have no symptoms):

- Yellow-green (sometimes frothy) vaginal discharge with a foul odor
- Discomfort during sex and when passing urine
- Irritation and itching in the genital area
- Lower abdominal pain in rare cases

If you have any symptoms, stop having sex and contact your doctor right away. Trichomoniasis is diagnosed by examination and can be cured with antibiotics. If not treated, the infection stays in the body. Even without symptoms, it can be passed to others. Having trichomoniasis also can increase a woman's risk of getting HIV if exposed to the virus.

People being treated for trichomoniasis should not have sex until they and their sex partners complete treatment and have no symptoms.

Steps to lower the risk of getting trichomoniasis and other STIs are (The following steps work best when used together):

- **Be faithful.** The surest way to avoid transmission of any STI is to abstain from sexual contact or to be in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has been tested and is known to be uninfected.
- **Use condoms correctly and every time you have sex.** Use condoms for all types of sexual contact, even if penetration does not occur. Use a condom from the very beginning to the very end of each sex act, and with every partner.
- **Know that some birth control methods — and other methods — don't protect against STIs.** Birth control methods including the pill, shots, implants, IUD, diaphragm, and spermicides, don't protect against STIs. If you use one of these methods, make sure to also use a condom with every sex act. Washing genitals, passing urine, and douching after sex will not keep you from getting an STI.
- **Talk with your sex partner(s) about using condoms before having sex.** Set the ground rules so you can avoid misunderstandings in a moment of passion. Be clear that you will not have any type of sex, any time, without using a condom. Remember, it's *your* body!
- **Get tested for STIs.** If either you or your partner has had other sexual partners in the past, get tested for STIs before becoming sexually active.
- **Have regular checkups and pelvic exams even if you're healthy.** During the checkup, the practitioner will ask a lot of questions. Answering honestly is the only way the practitioner is sure to give you the care you need.

Sources and/or additional resources:

WebMD: <http://www.webmd.com/sexual-conditions/guide/trichomoniasis>

Mayo Clinic: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/trichomoniasis/DS01163>

If you are a registered Millersville University student and you have questions or you need to make an appointment, please call Millersville University Health Services at 871-5250.