

Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID)

Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) is an infection of the uterus (womb), Fallopian tubes and/or ovaries in women.

Cause

PID is usually caused by a sexually transmissible infection (STI) such as gonorrhoea or chlamydia, but can be due to other infections. These infections begin at the cervix and can spread to the uterus and surrounding pelvic organs. Leaving STIs untreated greatly increases the chance of PID developing.

PID occasionally develops after having an intrauterine device (IUD) inserted, termination of pregnancy or other surgical procedures.

Symptoms

- Some women with PID have no symptoms, but symptoms can include:
- Unusual vaginal discharge or bleeding
- Pain when urinating or during vaginal sex
- Lower abdominal pain
- Heavier and more painful periods
- Fever

How is it transmitted?

PID is transmitted through unprotected vaginal sex or from surgical procedures.

How do I know if I have it?

Testing for PID involves a doctor taking swabs from the cervix and/or urethra, and doing an examination for tenderness or swelling of the uterus or tubes.

Sometimes it is necessary for the doctor to do an ultrasound or laparoscopy (where a thin tube is inserted through the wall of the abdomen, and the doctor can see the tubes and ovaries and surrounding tissue)

Treatment/management

PID is treated with antibiotics.

Sex should be avoided until treatment is complete. All sexual partners should be tested and treated.

Why is treatment important?

PID can damage the Fallopian tubes, causing scarring. This can lead to infertility.

Women who have had PID have an increased risk of an ectopic pregnancy (where the pregnancy implants in the tube rather than in the uterus). If left untreated, PID can also cause chronic pelvic pain.

Prevention

Using condoms and dams reduces the risk of contracting STIs which cause PID. Many people with an STI don't have any symptoms and are therefore unaware of the risk of passing it on.

Practising safe sex reduces the risk of contracting HIV and other STIs.

Practising safe sex reduces the risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmissible infections (STIs).

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For further information on sexual health visit the family planning website:
<http://www.fpwa-health.org.au>

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