

Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID)

PATIENT INFORMATION

What is pelvic inflammatory disease?

PID is the name given to infection in or around a woman's uterus (womb), fallopian tubes or ovaries. It is caused by bacteria spreading upwards into the uterus from the vagina or cervix (neck of the womb). It is commonly caused by sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as chlamydia or gonorrhoea. Sometimes PID can occur after pelvic operations, a pregnancy, or in the first few weeks after an IUD is put in.

PID sometimes causes infertility (difficulty getting pregnant), ectopic pregnancy (a baby growing in a place outside the womb), or long term pelvic pain. These things are more likely to happen if the treatment is late, so it's important to get treated straight away.

How does someone get PID?

PID can develop after having sex or sexual contact with someone who has an STI.

PID is especially common if you are under 30 years old, have had a new sexual contact in the last 3 months, don't always use condoms for sex, or if you've had an STI such as chlamydia or gonorrhoea.

You can prevent PID by using a condom every time you have sex, especially when you have sex with a new sexual contact.

How do I know if I have PID?

In the early stages you might not notice anything wrong. Most women have mild symptoms such as:

- Lower tummy pain or aching – a bit like a period pain.
- Pain deep inside during sex.
- Bleeding inbetween periods or after sex.
- Abnormal vaginal discharge.

How do I get tested?

It's important to have a sexual health check if you have symptoms of PID. If you want, take along someone you trust, for support.

There is no one single test for PID. The doctor will rely on your symptoms and what is found on examination to decide if you have PID. Often the tests will not tell you the cause and you can still have PID even if the STI tests are negative.

How do I get treated?

If your doctor thinks you might have PID you will get a 2 week course of antibiotic tablets and an injection.

Important advice

- Finish all the tablets you have been given, even if you feel better and the tests are all normal.
- You need to tell anyone you have had sex with within the last 3 months to get a sexual health check and treatment as a contact of PID, even if their tests are normal.
- You should avoid sex for 2 weeks from the start of your treatment and until 1 week after your sexual contact/s have been treated. If this is not possible always use a condom, including for oral sex, until your treatment and your sexual contact/s treatment has been completed.
- The complications of PID get worse if you get it again, so preventing it by using condoms is important.
- We recommend you have another sexual health check in 3 months in case you get an infection again.

Important information

- PID is infection around a woman's uterus (womb), fallopian tubes or ovaries.
- It is commonly, but not always, caused by STIs such as chlamydia or gonorrhoea.
- Symptoms include abdominal (tummy) pain and abnormal bleeding or discharge.
- PID is treated with antibiotics. You should finish all the treatment you have been given.
- You need to tell anyone you have had sex with in the last 3 months to get a sexual health check and treatment as a contact of PID.
- You should avoid sex or use condoms for 2 weeks from the start of your treatment and until 1 week after your sexual contact/s have been treated, so you don't pass the infection on to someone else.

The Ministry of Health supports the use of these clinical guidelines, developed by clinical experts and professional associations to guide clinical care.

This patient information leaflet has been produced by NZSHS. Every effort has been taken to ensure that the information in this leaflet is correct at the time of publishing (September 2017).