



Frequently Asked Questions

TRICHOMONIASIS

What is TRICHOMONIASIS?

Trichomoniasis is a common sexually transmitted disease (STD) that affects both women and men. 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. 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 vaginal intercourse or genital contact with an infected partner. Women can acquire the disease from infected men or women, whereas men usually contract it only from infected women.

How common is trichomoniasis?

Trichomoniasis is the most common curable STD 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.

Some women have signs or symptoms of infection marked by a frothy, yellow-green vaginal discharge with a strong odor. The infection also may cause discomfort during intercourse and urination, as well as irritation and itching of the female genital area. In rare cases, lower abdominal pain can occur. Symptoms usually appear in women within 5 to 28 days of exposure.

How is trichomoniasis diagnosed?

For both men and women, a health care provider must perform a physical examination and laboratory test to diagnose trichomoniasis. The parasite is harder to detect in men than in women. In women, a pelvic examination can reveal small red ulcerations (sores) 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.

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What is the treatment for trichomoniasis?

Trichomoniasis can usually be cured with the prescription drug Metronidazole given orally 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 is 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. Pregnant women can take Metronidazole.

Who is at risk for trichomoniasis?

Any sexually active person can be infected with trichomoniasis.

What are the complications of trichomoniasis?

Trichomoniasis in pregnant women may cause premature rupture of the membranes and preterm 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 can trichomoniasis be prevented?

The surest way to avoid transmission of sexually transmitted diseases 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.

Latex or polyurethane male condoms, when used consistently and correctly, can reduce the risk of transmission to trichomoniasis.

For more information:

Call the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at 1-800-232-4636, TTY: 1-888-232-6348 in English and Spanish.