

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 (womb neck). The most common cause is 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 can occasionally cause infertility (difficulty getting pregnant), ectopic pregnancy (a baby growing in a place outside the womb), or long term pain. These things are more likely to happen if the treatment is late, so it's important to get treated straight away.

How you get PID?

PID is usually caught by having sex or sexual contact with someone who has an STI.

PID is especially common if you are under 25 years old, have had a new sexual partner in the last 3 months, don't always use condoms for sex, or if you've had an STI such as chlamydia or gonorrhoea.

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 checked for it?

It's important to have a sexual health check if you have symptoms of PID.

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.

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 your tablets, even if you feel better and the tests are all fine.
- You need to tell anyone you have had sex with within the last 2 months to get a sexual health check and treatment.
- You should use condoms or avoid sex for 14 days after you have been treated, so you don't pass the infection on to someone else.
- All partners from the last 2 months need treatment, even if their tests are negative.
- Use condoms or avoid sex for 7 days after your partner(s) have been treated or you may get PID back again.
- Return to see your doctor if you are asked to, but also have a repeat sexual health check in 3 months to make sure everything is okay.
- The complications of PID get worse if you get it again, so preventing it is important.
- **You can prevent PID by using a condom every time you have sex, especially when you have sex with a new partner.**

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 2 months to get a sexual health check and treatment.
- You should use condoms or avoid sex for 7 days after you have been treated, so you don't pass the infection on to someone else.