



# PELVIC INFLAMMATORY DISEASE (PID) FACTSHEET

## WHAT IS PID?

Pelvic inflammatory disease (known as PID) is the infection and inflammation of one or more organs in a woman's\* pelvic area. This could be the uterus (womb), fallopian tubes, or ovaries.

## HOW DO YOU GET PID?

PID happens when an infection moves up from the vagina or cervix (the neck of the womb) into the uterus and fallopian tubes. The sexually transmitted infections (STIs) chlamydia and gonorrhoea are common causes of PID. Sometimes PID can occur after a surgical procedure such as a pregnancy termination (abortion) or insertion of an intrauterine contraceptive device (IUD).

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Symptoms of PID can include:

- New pain or cramps in the pelvis (lower abdomen). This pain might be felt during sex.
- Abnormal vaginal discharge
- Vaginal bleeding after sex or between periods
- Increased period pain
- Pain when passing urine or making bowel movements
- Feeling sick (nausea), fever, chills, or vomiting

**PID can cause several complications if it is not treated quickly, including problems with fertility. If you have any symptoms of PID visit your GP as soon as possible.**

These symptoms don't necessarily mean you have PID, but can be associated with the condition. These symptoms can develop over days or weeks and in some women the symptoms are very mild and may go unnoticed.

## HOW IS PID DIAGNOSED?

Your doctor or nurse practitioner will ask you about your symptoms and may ask you to do a blood test and/or urine test to check for pregnancy or an STI (including chlamydia).

Your doctor may also perform a pelvic examination, where a speculum and/or gloved fingers are inserted into your vagina. This is often the best way to diagnose PID because it allows your doctor to check for signs of PID such as pain or tenderness around your uterus. You do not have to agree to this examination and you can stop it at any point if you feel uncomfortable.

If you like, you can ask if there is another person available (such as a nurse) to be present throughout the examination. If your doctor is male and you would prefer a female doctor to perform the examination, you can also ask if there is a female doctor available.

## HOW DO YOU TREAT PID?

PID is treated with a combination of antibiotics that need to be taken for at least 14 days. Your partner/s will also need some treatment for STIs. It is very important that you don't have sex during PID treatment, and that you complete the full course of antibiotics, even if your symptoms have gone.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

You will need to see your doctor again within 2 to 3 days (or as advised) of starting treatment to check your results and that your symptoms are improving.

**If your symptoms get worse or don't improve within 2-3 days of starting treatment, you need to return to your doctor.**

**If you have bad symptoms (such as severe pain, fever, nausea or vomiting) you should seek immediate medical attention at your nearest hospital emergency department.**

## WHAT HAPPENS IF PID IS NOT TREATED?

If PID is not treated early, it can cause chronic pelvic pain and can damage the fallopian tubes making it more difficult to get pregnant later on (infertility) or cause complications in pregnancy such as ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy outside of the uterus). The earlier that PID is diagnosed and treated, the less likely that these complications will occur. Repeat cases of PID also make these complications more likely.

## HOW CAN YOU PREVENT PID?

Using condoms during sex is the best method of protecting against STIs and PID.

If you are sexually active and aged under 30 years, you should visit your general practitioner (GP) for a STI test once a year. You should also have a STI test if you are worried you might have an STI, or if you have any symptoms, or have a new partner, or if your partner has recently been diagnosed with an STI.

You and your partners can be infected with an STI and not show any symptoms. Diagnosing and treating STIs as quickly as possible can prevent the STI from causing PID.

## DO MY SEXUAL PARTNERS NEED TREATMENT IF I HAVE PID?

If you are diagnosed with PID, it is very important that any **current** sexual partners are informed as soon as possible so that they can be tested and treated for STIs. This is because STIs such as chlamydia and gonorrhoea are common causes of PID. If your current partners are not tested and treated, then there is a chance they could pass an STI back to you or onto someone else.

You may also need to inform **previous** sexual partners. Your GP will let you know if you need to do this, and can help you decide how to contact them.

## HOW DO I TELL MY PARTNERS?

You can tell your partners directly; this could be face-to-face, through a phone call, or by text or message. If you feel uncomfortable about telling your partner directly, you can use the below websites to send a text or email to your partner. If you prefer, this can be anonymous:

<https://letthemknow.org.au/>

<https://www.bettertoknow.org.au>

You can also ask your doctor for help if you need.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF I HAVE AN IUD?

If you are diagnosed with PID and have an IUD it can often be left in, as long as your symptoms improve within 72 hours after starting treatment. If they don't improve, your doctor may need to remove your IUD. Another IUD may be inserted after treatment has been completed and you are free from any symptoms. To prevent an unplanned pregnancy you will need to use another form of contraception during the time that you don't have an IUD.

## WHERE CAN I GO TO FOR FURTHER ADVICE?

You can visit your local family planning clinic, sexual health clinic, or GP for further information about PID.

## FOR FURTHER STI AND SEXUAL HEALTH INFORMATION:

<https://playsafe.health.nsw.gov.au/>

<https://www.mshc.org.au/>

<https://www.true.org.au/Health-information/sexually-transmitted-infections-stis>

Disclaimer: This factsheet was developed for the Management of Chlamydia Cases in Australia (MoCCA) study. The information in this factsheet is adapted from resources developed by Melbourne Sexual Health Centre and Family Planning NSW.

It is designed to provide you with information on PID and is not intended to replace the need for a consultation with your doctor. All clients are strongly advised to check with their doctor about any specific questions or concerns. All effort has been taken to ensure that the information in this factsheet is correct at the time of printing.

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### Example message for your current partner/s if you are diagnosed with PID:

Hey, I have been diagnosed with PID, a condition that is commonly caused by an STI. You should head to your GP for a STI test and treatment. Sorry to give you this news but I thought it was better that you knew.



### Example message for your partner/s if you are diagnosed with an STI:

Hey, my chlamydia/gonorrhoea test is positive and you might have it too. You should head to your GP for a STI test. Sorry to give you this news but I thought it was better that you knew.