

Trichomonas

Trichomoniasis (or “trich”) is a very common sexually transmitted disease (STD) that is caused by infection with a parasite called *Trichomonas vaginalis*. Most women with trichomoniasis have no symptoms, but it can cause a vaginal discharge that smells bad and might be foamy and greenish-yellow, itching of the vagina or the area around the vagina, burning or pain during urination, or even pain during sex in about 30% of infected women.

There is a vaginal smear and swab than must be performed to test for trichomoniasis, as symptoms alone are not sufficient to make a diagnosis. If the test is positive, you should be screened for other STD’s and treated, as well as your partner.

Trichomoniasis by itself may not be dangerous outside of pregnancy, but it can increase the risk of getting or spreading other sexually transmitted infections. For example, trichomoniasis can cause genital inflammation that makes it easier to get infected with the HIV virus, or to pass the HIV virus on to a sex partner. It can also lead to abscesses in the pelvis, especially after gynecological procedures,

Pregnant women with trichomoniasis are more likely to have their babies too early, and babies born to infected mothers are more likely to have a low birth weight.

Trichomoniasis can be successfully treated with a single dose of oral antibiotics, either metronidazole or tinidazole. It is safe for pregnant women to take this medication. It is advisable not to drink alcohol within 24 hours after taking this kind of antibiotics as it can have uncomfortable side effects. Your partner should be treated as well with the same medication.

About 1 in 5 women who have been treated for trichomoniasis can get it again. Do not have sex for a week after treatment. You can lower your chances of getting trichomoniasis if you use a condom every time you have sex, and avoid sex when you or your partner has any symptoms that could be caused by an infection, such as itching, discharge, or pain with urination.

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