

Trichomonas

Trichomoniasis (or “trich”) is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) that is caused by parasite called trichomonas vaginalis. It is a common cause of **vaginitis** (vaginal infection).

Most women with trichomoniasis have **no symptoms**, but it can cause a **vaginal discharge** that **smells bad** (like fish) and might be foamy and green or 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.

The diagnosis is made by obtaining a **vaginal swab**, as symptoms alone are not sufficient to make a diagnosis. The swab can be self-administered by the patient, or obtained by the health care professional. If the test is positive, screening for all the other STD’s is recommended.

Trichomoniasis by itself may not be dangerous, but it can increase the risk of acquiring or spreading other STDs. For example, trich 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 (collection of pus) in the pelvis, especially after gynecological procedures,

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

Trichomoniasis can be successfully treated with a single dose of oral antibiotics, either metronidazole or tinidazole, provided for free by the BC CDC. 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 cause nausea and vomiting as unpleasant side effects. Partner(s) should be treated with the same medication.

About 1 in 5 women who have been treated for trichomoniasis can get it again. It is advisable to avoid have sex for a week after treatment. The risk of contracting trichomoniasis can be reduced by the consistent use of condom every time you have sex, avoiding sex when there are symptoms that could be caused by an infection, such as itching, discharge, or pain with urination, and avoiding multiple sexual partners.

Dr Roberto Leon