

Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID)

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PID is when the upper part of the female reproductive system are infected (uterus, fallopian tubes, ovaries).

Symptoms

In some cases symptoms are not present. When they are present, it can include:

- Lower abdominal pain
- Vaginal discharge
- Fever
- Burning/ Pain during urination & sexual intercourse
- Irregular menstruation
- Vaginal discharge
- Uterine tenderness

Cause

PID are caused by bacteria that spread from the vagina to the cervix. These bacteria are usually the same as those that cause STDs.

Risk factors

The risk factors for PID is the same as for STDs (See page 65-66) and are commonly caused by STDs. PID are more likely to present if a person has a history of a prior PID infection, had recent sexual intercourse or had recent onset of menstruation.

Diagnosis

PID can be diagnosed with the help of a pelvic examination. Pus in the fallopian tubes, endometrial inflammation, fluid in the uterus and thickened fallopian tubes are diagnostic of PID. Imaging, surgical exploration or a sample culture for organisms can also be used.

Treatment

It is very important to seek treatment for PID, seeing that untreated PID can result in long-term complications, such as: infertility, ectopic pregnancy, chronic pelvic pain, abscess and cancer. A woman's sexual partner should also be treated for the infection, if she is diagnosed with PID. Antibiotics are the main treatment. This can be prescribed by a doctor. If your symptoms do not improve, on antibiotics, after 3 to 4 days, you should go and see your doctor again.



Prevention

PID can be prevented through regular testing for STDs (of you and your partner). The early detection of STDs, can prevent the development thereof into a PID. Prevention methods for STDs can also prevent PID. (See page 68-69) The most important prevention method is, however, to see a doctor as soon as you have symptoms that might suggest PID (See above list). PID can also be prevented by seeking medical attention when you find out that your sexual partner or a previous sexual partner has, or might have had a STD. Having only one sexual partner can furthermore reduce PIDs.

Complications

Early identification and treatment of PID are extremely important to prevent complications and long term effects thereof. PID can result in:

- Damage to your reproductive system
- Infertility
- Long term pelvic pain
- Problems with pregnancy

