

# PELVIC INFLAMMATORY DISEASE (PID) FACTSHEET

## WHAT IS PID?

Pelvic inflammatory disease (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 transmissible infections (STIs) chlamydia and gonorrhoea are common causes of PID.

Sometimes PID can occur after a 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 might happen during sex.
- Abnormal vaginal discharge or bleeding
- Feeling sick (nausea), fever, chills, or vomiting

These symptoms can develop over days or weeks. In some women the symptoms are very mild and may go unnoticed.

## HOW IS PID DIAGNOSED?

Your doctor or nurse will ask you about symptoms. They may ask you to do a blood and/or urine test to check for pregnancy or STIs.

Your doctor or nurse may also perform a pelvic examination. This is where a speculum and/or gloved fingers are inserted into your vagina. This allows your doctor or nurse to check for signs of PID such as pain or tenderness.

## HOW DO YOU TREAT PID?

PID is treated with several antibiotics that need to be taken for at least 14 days. Your partner/s will also need to be tested for STIs.

It is very important that you don't have sex while taking treatment. You must complete the full course of antibiotics, even if your symptoms have gone.

## Been diagnosed with PID?

### Follow these steps:

- Take antibiotics as directed by your doctor
- Avoid sex while you are taking treatment
- Return to your doctor for a follow up appointment in 2-3 days
- Let your sexual partners know that they need to be tested and treated for STIs
- Use condoms to avoid a reinfection

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

*\*In this factsheet woman refers to a person with a uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries. However, we recognise that people who identify as men can also have female reproductive organs.*

## 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 your symptoms don't improve, your doctor may need to remove your IUD.

Another IUD may be inserted after treatment has been completed. To prevent an unplanned pregnancy you will need to use another form of contraception during the time that you don't have an IUD.

## DO MY SEXUAL PARTNERS NEED TREATMENT?

If you are diagnosed with PID, it is very important that any **current** sexual partners are told as soon as possible so they can be tested for STIs. You may also need to tell **previous** sexual partners. Your GP will tell you if you need to do this.

You can ask your doctor for advice about how to tell your partner/s. You may want to tell them directly (e.g. face-to-face, by phone call, or text). If you prefer, you can send them an anonymous text or email using a website:

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

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

## HOW CAN YOU PREVENT PID?

Using condoms during sex is the best method of protecting against STIs. Diagnosing and treating STIs as quickly as possible can prevent PID.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Your GP can give you advice specific to your situation. You can also seek advice from sexual health or family planning services in your area or visit the following websites:

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

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

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

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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