

VAGINITIS (trichomoniasis)

TO YOUR HEALTH - PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

10.6

DESCRIPTION

Trichomoniasis is a parasitic infection that affects both sexes, but is more common in women. Trichomoniasis is a sexually transmitted disease (STD).

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Women

- Discomfort varies greatly from woman to woman and from time to time in the same woman
- Foul-smelling, frothy vaginal discharge that is most apparent several days after a menstrual period.
- Vaginal itching and pain
- Pain with intercourse
- Redness of the vaginal lips (labia) and vulva
- Painful and frequent urination

Men

- Infected men usually have no symptoms
- Rarely may have painful urination and a pale white discharge from the penis

CAUSES

Infection from a tiny parasite, *Trichomonas vaginalis*. The parasite passes from person to person during sexual intercourse. It may live in its host for years without producing symptoms. Then, perhaps from altered resistance, it will suddenly multiply rapidly and cause symptoms. Since it thrives in both male and female, both sexual partners must receive treatment.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Having multiple sex partners
- Having sex with someone who has, or had, multiple sexual partners
- Engaging in unsafe sex
- On very rare occasions, the infection can be spread by sharing moist towels, washcloths or even from Jacuzzis and hot baths.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Use latex (rubber) condoms during sexual intercourse.
- Limit your sexual partners or practice abstinence. The more sex partners you have, the greater risk of any sexual transmitted disease.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Can be cured with treatment.

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This information is for educational purposes only. Consult your doctor for specific medical advice, diagnosis and treatment.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

If the infection is untreated, it can lead to other problems. Women may be more at risk for HIV infection (if exposed). If pregnant, it may cause early delivery and low birth weight baby. In men, prostate, bladder or urethra problems may occur.

GENERAL MEASURES

- Diagnostic tests may include laboratory studies of vaginal discharge and pelvic examination. Tests to check for other STI's may also be done.
- Both sexual partners require simultaneous treatment to prevent re-infection.
- Don't douche.
- Wear cotton underpants or panty hose with a cotton crotch.
- Take showers instead of tub baths.
- Don't sit around in wet clothing, especially in a wet bathing suit.
- If urinating causes burning, urinate through a tubular device, such as a toilet-paper roll or plastic cup with the bottom cut out. Pour a cup of warm water over the genital area while you urinate.

MEDICATION

Metronidazole is usually prescribed for you and your sexual partner or partners. Follow directions carefully. Don't drink alcohol or use products containing vinegar when you take metronidazole. Alcohol or vinegar and metronidazole interact to cause a violent reaction resulting in nausea, vomiting, sweating, weakness, and or other symptoms. Avoid using products that contain alcohol (some cough syrups, mouthwash, etc).

ACTIVITY

- Avoid overexertion, heat and excessive sweating.
- Delay sexual relations until you are well and treatment is complete.

DIET

No special diet instructions except avoidance of alcohol and vinegar if you are being treated with metronidazole.

NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF...

- Symptoms persists longer than one week or worsen, despite treatment.
- Unusual vaginal bleeding or swelling develops.
- After treatment, symptoms recur.



Southern
Illinois University
Carbondale

618-453-3311

Dial-A-Nurse is available after-hours until 10:30 p.m. during fall and spring semesters. In case of emergency dial 911.