



# Fact Sheet: Trichomoniasis

## What is Trichomoniasis?

Trichomoniasis is a common sexually transmitted disease (STD) that affects both women and men, although symptoms are more common in women. Trichomoniasis is caused by the single-celled protozoan parasite, *Trichomonas vaginalis*. The vagina is the most common site of infection in women, and the urethra (urine canal) is the most common site of infection in men.

## What are the symptoms?

Most symptoms will appear 3-14 days after exposure. Many people have no symptoms.

### Men may experience:

- Temporary irritation inside the penis
- Mild discharge
- Slight burning after urination or ejaculation.

### Women may experience:

- Frothy, yellow-green vaginal discharge with a strong odor
- Discomfort during intercourse and urination
- Irritation and itching of the female genital area.
- In rare cases, lower abdominal pain can occur.

## How is it spread?

Trichomoniasis is spread during vaginal sex. The parasite is sexually transmitted through penis-to-vagina intercourse or vulva-to-vulva (the genital area outside the vagina) contact with an infected partner. Women can acquire the disease from infected men or women, but men usually contract it only from infected women.

## How is it treated?

Trichomoniasis can usually be cured with the prescription drug, metronidazole, given by mouth in a single dose. The symptoms of trichomoniasis in infected men may disappear within a few weeks without treatment. However, an infected man, even a man who has never had symptoms or whose symptoms have stopped, can continue to infect or re-infect a female partner until he has been treated. Therefore, both partners should be treated at the same time to eliminate the parasite. Persons being treated for trichomoniasis should avoid sex until they and their sex partners complete treatment and have no symptoms. Metronidazole can be used by pregnant women.

## How is it prevented?

- **Don't have sex.** You cannot give or get an STD if there is no contact with the penis, vagina, mouth or anus of an infected person.
- **Limit your number of sexual partners.** The more people you have sex with, the greater the chance of getting trichomoniasis.
- **If you choose to have sex, be prepared.** Have condoms with a water-based lubricant and use a new one every time you have sex.
- **Have regular exams if you are sexually active.** If you think you have trichomoniasis, get tested. Your health care provider can test for all STDs, or you can be examined and treated at the Genesee County STD Clinic. Ask your partner(s) to get tested.
- **Remember, a Pap smear is not a test for trichomoniasis.**
- **Ask to be tested if you are at risk.**
- **Tell your partner if you are infected;** tell anyone you have had sex with that they need to be tested. If they are not treated they may be harmed for the rest of their lives and may also pass it back to you.

*This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information call your health care provider*

Visit our website at: [www.gchd.us](http://www.gchd.us) or the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention at: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

**Genesee County Health Department**

630 S. Saginaw Street  
Flint, Michigan 48502-1540

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