

# PID

Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) is a serious infection usually caused by gonorrhea, chlamydia or other sexually transmitted bacteria. The bacteria are passed during vaginal sex, and go from the vagina through the cervix (opening to the uterus), into the uterus, tubes or ovaries. They cause infection, pain and scar tissue. PID is the leading cause of infertility (loss of the ability to have children) in women.

## ***How is PID spread?***

The bacteria that cause PID are passed from a man to a woman during vaginal sex. Men can have an infection and not know it because they may not have any symptoms (discharge or burning on urination). Women may be infected with gonorrhea or chlamydia without having any symptoms for many months, even years.

## ***How do I know if I have PID?***

**A woman can have any of the following problems:**

- Pain in the belly during sex
- Pain in the lower back
- Mild or severe pain in the lower belly
- Fever, chills or vomiting
- Unusual bleeding or discharge from the vagina
- There may be **NO** signs of PID

## ***Is PID a serious problem?***

Yes! Once bacteria get into the vagina they can travel up through the cervix, uterus and then out to the fallopian tubes and ovaries. This may cause many long-term problems.

- Scarring and blockage in the fallopian tubes (can't get pregnant in the uterus).
- Scarring around uterus, fallopian tubes, and ovaries (vaginal sex can be painful).
- Pregnancy in the fallopian tubes, instead of the uterus ("ectopic" or "tubal" pregnancy). If this happens emergency surgery is needed and fallopian tube(s) may be removed.
- Each time a woman has PID her chances of future normal pregnancy lowers by 15-30%.

## ***How is PID treated?***

- Antibiotic medicine is given that would treat gonorrhea or chlamydia (most common infections that cause PID)
- You may need to go to the hospital for treatment if PID is severe.

- Be sure to return to the clinic or hospital for all your follow-up appointments, to make certain the infection is getting better.
- Do not have sexual intercourse for at least 2 weeks, to allow healing and to prevent spreading the infection in your body.
- Stop all vigorous exercise for 2 weeks, and try hot baths while being treated to encourage your body to heal.
- Finish all your medications, even if you feel better.
- Your sex partners (and their partners) must get checked and treated also, or you can be infected again.

### **What can I do to avoid PID?**

- Get an STD check-up if you have had sex without using a condom. Try to get a check-up before your next menstrual period (we think it's easier for bacteria to get up through the cervix at this time).
- Use condoms every time you have vaginal sex, even if you are using birth control pills, the patch, ring or the birth control shot to prevent pregnancy. They will not protect you from STD infections, including HIV.
- Barrier birth control methods: foam, condoms (male and female), diaphragm and suppositories for birth control can help because they keep bacteria and semen from getting into the cervix (opening to the uterus).
- Plan ahead! Protect yourself!
- If you're thinking of having sex with a new partner: Talk about STDS, Talk about your wish to have protected, safer sex (male or female condoms) 100% of the time
- Suggest an STD check-up for both of you before having sex.
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### **For more information about STD's, consult these websites:**

<http://www.noah-health.org/>      <http://www.sfsi.org/>  
<http://www.ashastd.org/>  
<http://www.cdc.gov/std/>  
<http://www.dph.sf.ca.us/sfcityclinic/>

If you contracted PID and you do not know the HIV status of that sexual partner, you should be concerned about your increased risk of HIV. Talk to your clinician.



For a STD check-up or treatment,  
see your doctor, local clinic, or come to:

City Clinic  
 356 Seventh Street  
 (between Folsom and Harrison)  
 San Francisco, CA 94103  
 (415)487-5500  
<http://www.dph.sf.ca.us/sfcityclinic/>