



## Trichomoniasis

### What is trichomoniasis?

Trichomoniasis is a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) caused by a parasite (bug). Trichomoniasis can affect both men and women but is more common in women.

### How can a person get trichomoniasis?

Trichomoniasis is spread when someone has penis-to-vagina sex or vagina-to-vagina contact with someone who is infected. Women can get the disease from infected men and women, but men usually contract it only from infected women.

### You can increase your risk of infection by:

- Having sex without using a latex or polyurethane condom
- Having multiple sex partners
- Having a different STI or HIV

### Who can get trichomoniasis?

Men and women who are sexually active can get trichomoniasis, but women contract the disease more often than men. In the U.S., 1.1 million new cases occur in men and women each year.

### What are the symptoms of trichomoniasis?

Most people do not have symptoms. Symptoms in women can start 5 days after being infected but can take as long as 28 days to appear. Most men do not have symptoms.

For those who do have symptoms, the most common ones are:

#### For Women:

- Unusual or increased discharge (yellow-green) from the vagina with a strong smell
- Pain or discomfort when peeing or during sex
- Irritation or itching from the vagina
- In more serious infections, pain in the lower stomach or back

#### For Men:

- Mild discharge coming from the penis
- Irritation inside the penis
- Mild burning after peeing or ejaculating (releases semen)

### How long can an infected person spread trichomoniasis?

A person can spread trichomoniasis to others from the time they become infected until they are treated. A person can spread trichomoniasis to others even if they do not have symptoms. If you are taking medication, do not have sex until you are done with your treatment and no longer have symptoms.

### How can I find out if I have trichomoniasis?

The only way to know for sure if you have trichomoniasis is to **get tested**. A healthcare provider will perform a physical exam and take a swab from the infected area to test for trichomoniasis. Trichomoniasis can also increase a women's risk of getting HIV so it is important to get tested.

### **Where can I get tested?**

Most health care providers offer testing for STIs. To find a health care center in a neighborhood near you, call the Mayor's Health Line at **617-534-5050** and **1-800-847-0710 (toll-free)** or visit <http://www.hivtest.org/STDTesting.aspx> and enter your zip code.

### **Can trichomoniasis be treated?**

Yes, trichomoniasis can be treated with medication. See your healthcare provider again if you still have symptoms after having taken your medication.

### **Should my partner get treated?**

Recent or regular sex partners **should also be treated** for trichomoniasis before having sex again so it is best to be treated at the same time. It is important to know that you can get infected with trichomoniasis many times.

### **Can trichomoniasis affect a pregnant woman and her baby?**

Yes, pregnant women with trichomoniasis may have babies who are born early or with low birth weight.

### **How serious is trichomoniasis?**

The symptoms caused by trichomoniasis can increase a woman's chances of getting other STIs such as HIV and Chlamydia. To reduce this risk, get tested and use the prevention methods listed below.

### **How can you protect yourself from getting trichomoniasis?**

The only 100% effective way to prevent trichomoniasis is to not have sex. If you do have sex, you can limit your risk by taking the following steps:

- Always use a latex, nitrile, or polyurethane condom or barrier (dental dam) when having anal, vaginal and/or oral sex
  - Condoms made from "natural" materials may protect against pregnancy but NOT STIs
- Reduce your number of partners if you choose to have sex
- Talk with your partner about their STI status and getting tested
- Talk with your health care provider about sex safety and getting tested
- Understand that having sex while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol can increase the likelihood of unprotected sex
- Contact your health care provider if you experience any symptoms

