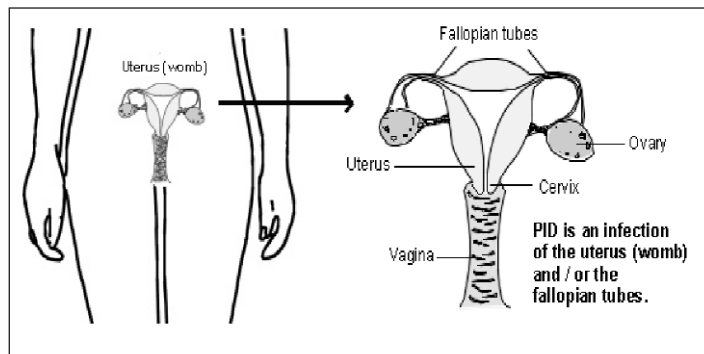


Pelvic Inflammatory Disease

Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) is the infection of the uterus (womb) and/or other reproductive organs. PID can cause damage to the fallopian tubes and in other areas near the uterus and ovaries. A glossary of terms is provided at the end of this factsheet.



<http://www.patient.co.uk/showdoc/23069029/>

Causes

PID is caused by bacteria in the internal reproductive organs (above). The most common way that this happens is through sexually transmitted infections (STIs), especially chlamydia and gonorrhoea. In the UK chlamydia is the most common cause of PID. Sexually active women under the age of 25 are most at risk of developing it. It is contracted through a sexual partner who is infected with chlamydia or gonorrhoea. It can also be caused by pregnancy termination or pelvic surgery.

Symptoms/effects

Thousands of women are treated for PID every year in the UK¹. Some women do not have any symptoms at all and therefore it is difficult to treat it at an early stage. Yet these are some of the common symptoms:

- Pain
- Vomiting
- Pain in the lower abdomen
- Pain during/after sex
- Bleeding in-between periods or after sex
- Lower back pain
- Abnormal vaginal discharge
- Increased period pain
- Burning/pain when urinating

A variety of tests may be carried out once a doctor is contacted, as these symptoms are not always linked to PID.

Diagnosis

Treatments can be done anonymously by a local genito-urinary (GUM) clinic if required. Please consult the useful contacts list below for more details.

During consultation, a doctor will ask questions regarding the woman's periods and methods of contraception.

The doctor will carry out an exam similar to a smear, taking specimens from inside the vagina and the cervix using a cotton wool swab. The swabs are then sent to a laboratory to be examined.

In some cases if a woman has severe symptoms, the doctor may send her for a trans-vaginal ultrasound, which is similar to a pregnancy scan.

¹http://hcd2.bupa.co.uk/fact_sheets/html/Pelvic_inflammatory_disease.html



Treatment

To treat an early stage PID, the doctor would normally prescribe two antibiotics to combat the infection, to be taken for up to two weeks. Usually women are advised not to have sex during this time. It is very important for her partner to be checked and treated if necessary.

If in a rare case PID is not able to be treated by antibiotics, hospital treatment would be required in which the antibiotics would be given through a drip into the arm. If PID is left untreated, it can result in serious long-term complications, such as chronic pelvic pain, sub fertility or ectopic pregnancy.

To prevent sexually transmitted infections which cause PID, always use a condom. For more information look at our factsheet on STIs.

Although condoms provide some protection for both men and women against sexually transmitted infections, in an ideal situation couples should attend screening prior to commencing a new sexual relationship.

Useful contacts**Terrence Higgins Trust**

Helpline: 0845 122 1200

Website: www.tht.org.uk**Family Planning Association**

Helpline: 0845 122 8690 (Mon-Fri 9am–6pm)

Website: www.fpa.org.uk**Sexual Health Line**

Tel: 0800 567 123

This factsheet has been produced by Women's Health Concern and reviewed by members of our Medical Advisory Panel.

It is for your information and advice and should be used in consultation with your own medical practitioner. **Review date: November 2007.**