

# Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID)

Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) is inflammation caused by infections ascending from the vagina or cervix to the upper genital tract. This includes the lining of the uterus, the ovaries, the fallopian tubes, the uterine wall and the uterine ligaments that hold these structures in place. It is estimated that there are approximately 1 million cases of PID in the U.S. each year.

## CAUSES

Approximately 85% of all cases of PID are caused by sexually transmitted infections (STIs), also called sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). The disease can be caused by many different organisms or combinations of organisms but is frequently caused by gonorrhea and chlamydia. The other 15% of infections may occur following procedures that create an open wound, such as:

- Biopsy from the lining of the uterus
- D & C (dilation and curettage - a procedure that involves scraping of the uterine lining)
- Insertion of an IUD (intrauterine device)
- Abortion

## SYMPTOMS

- Painful intercourse (may be the first sign)
- Pain and tenderness involving the lower abdomen, cervix, uterus, and ovaries
- Fever and chills
- Nausea and/or diarrhea
- Abnormal vaginal bleeding or discharge

## TREATMENT

If treated early, PID can usually be cured. If untreated, the infection may spread to other abdominal organs and can be very serious. PID is treated with antibiotics, often using a combination of antibiotics. The antibiotics may be an injection, an oral form, or both. It is critical for a patient to complete all of the prescribed medications and to follow-up directions such as:

- Rest and take acetaminophen or ibuprofen for pain relief and fever.
- Do not have sexual intercourse until your medical provider tells you it is ok.
- It is also very important that the woman's partner(s) be treated, even if they have no symptoms of infection. This assures treatment of any possible infection and prevents the partner from spreading it back to the woman or to another partner.
- Occasionally, if the infection is severe, a woman may need to be hospitalized to receive antibiotics intravenously or to have a surgical procedure performed.

## IMPORTANCE OF TREATMENT

- PID is the most common, serious infection of women aged 16 to 25 years of age.
- Untreated pelvic infections may cause adhesions in the fallopian tubes, which may lead to infertility.
- One in four women with acute PID develops future problems such as ectopic pregnancy or chronic pelvic pain from adhesions. Early treatment can usually prevent these problems.

## PREVENTION

- PID is usually a result of sexually transmitted infection and is much more common among women who have multiple partners and among women who do not use latex condoms.
- Limit number of sexual partners to as few as possible.
- Always use condoms and/or avoid intercourse.
- Discuss STI prevention methods with your partner ahead of time.
- Have yearly gynecological (GYN) exams and Pap smears.
- See your medical provider if you have concerns about abdominal pain, abnormal bleeding or discharge, painful sex, fever, chills or any other unusual gynecological symptoms.

## SCHEDULING AN APPOINTMENT

The University Health Service (UHS) offers a full range of health care services for men and women. You can schedule an appointment with your primary care provider (PCP) by calling 275-2662. Women can also schedule an appointment with one of the women's health nurse practitioners. All visits to UHS are confidential.

## LINKS

*To learn more about PID, you can visit:*

Planned Parenthood

<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/pp2/portal/files/portal/medicalinfo/sti/pub-sti-facts-4.xml#pid>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

<http://www.cdc.gov/std/PID/STDFact-PID.htm>

familydoctor.org:

<http://familydoctor.org/213.xml>

ASHA:

<http://www.ashastd.org/stdfaqs/pid.html>