

## Trichomoniasis symptoms & treatment



### FAST FACTS

- Trichomoniasis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by a tiny parasite.
- It can be passed on through having sex without a condom with someone who has the infection.
- Using male and female condoms during sex will help to protect you from trichomoniasis.
- It is easy to test for trichomoniasis, and the infection can be treated with antibiotics.

## What is trichomoniasis?

Trichomoniasis, or trich (pronounced 'trick'), is a [sexually transmitted infection \(STI\)](#) caused by a tiny parasite called trichomonas vaginalis.

It is easy to treat but most people don't have any symptoms. If you've had unprotected sex, or you are worried about trichomoniasis or other STIs, it's important to get tested as soon as possible.

Getting the infection while pregnant can make women more likely to give birth prematurely and have a baby with a low birth weight.

## How do you get trichomoniasis?

Trichomoniasis is easily passed on through unprotected [vaginal sex](#) (when the penis goes into the vagina) with someone who has the infection – even if they don't have any symptoms.

Trichomoniasis is not usually passed on through [oral](#) or [anal sex](#), and can't be passed on through kissing or hugging.

## How do you prevent trichomoniasis?

Using a new [male](#) or [female condom](#) every time you have sex will help prevent you getting trichomoniasis.

However, some people have the infection in the area around the penis or vagina that is not covered by a condom. This means sometimes the infection can still spread even if you use a condom.

Regularly testing for trichomoniasis and other STIs will help you to look after your sexual health, especially if you are having sex with multiple partners. It's really important to talk to your partner/s about your status and decide how to have safer sex together.

Trichomoniasis can also be passed on through sharing sex toys, although this is less common. Always cover sex toys with a new condom and wash them after use.

Remember that taking [PrEP](#) or using the contraceptive pill or other forms of contraception (apart from condoms) won't prevent you from getting trichomoniasis.

## What are the symptoms of trichomoniasis?

Many people with trichomoniasis don't have any symptoms. If you do get symptoms, they normally appear within a month of infection.

Trich symptoms in women include:

- yellow-green vaginal discharge which may have an unpleasant fishy smell
- soreness, swelling and itching in and around the vagina
- pain when urinating (peeing) or having sex
- pain in the lower stomach.

Trich symptoms in men include:

- thin, white discharge from the tip of the penis
- pain or a burning sensation when urinating (peeing)
- soreness, swelling and redness around the head of the penis and foreskin.

## How do you test for trichomoniasis?

Getting tested for trichomoniasis is easy and doesn't hurt. A healthcare professional will examine you and take a swab from the vagina or the penis. Sometimes men will also be asked to give a urine sample.

If you find out that you have trichomoniasis you should test for other STIs. You will need to tell any recent sexual partners so they can also get tested and treated. You can ask your healthcare professional for advice about this.

## How is trichomoniasis treated?

Trichomoniasis is easily treated with antibiotics. This can either be taken in one day as a single dose or over the course of a week.

Wait until you have finished your treatment before having sex again, even if you don't have any symptoms. If you have taken the one-day treatment, you will need to avoid having sex for seven days afterwards. Ask your healthcare professional before having sex again.

Remember that if you have been treated for trichomoniasis you are not immune and you can get infected again.

Without treatment, the infection can last for months or even years.

## Trichomoniasis and HIV

Having an STI, including trichomoniasis, increases your risk of getting [HIV](#).

If you are living with HIV and also have trichomoniasis, your viral load will likely increase. This will make you more likely to pass on HIV if you have sex without a condom, even if you are taking HIV drugs (antiretrovirals).

However, if someone has an [undetectable](#) viral load, there's no evidence that trichomoniasis makes them more likely to pass on HIV.

If you're taking [antiretroviral treatment](#), it's important to discuss with your doctor how treatment for trichomoniasis may interact with your HIV drugs.

If you're worried about HIV, find out everything you need to know in our [HIV Transmission and Prevention](#) section.

## HELP US HELP OTHERS

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Sources:

[NHS \(2018\) 'Trichomoniasis'](#)

[HHS \(2019\) 'Trichomoniasis'](#)

[Mayo Clinic \(2018\) 'Trichomonas'](#)