



# Trichomoniasis

## What is Trichomoniasis?

Trichomoniasis (also known as “trich”) is an easily treatable sexually transmitted infection. It is caused by the parasite *Trichomonas vaginalis* and is spread through genital contact during sex.

For individuals with a vagina, the infection happens in the vagina and/or the urethra. In individuals with a penis, the infection only happens in the urethra.

Trichomoniasis can only be fully prevented by abstaining from all sexual activity. However, using latex condoms during sexual intercourse can reduce your chance of contracting trichomoniasis (along with other STIs).

## What Are the Symptoms of Trichomoniasis?

About 70% of people with trichomoniasis do not experience any symptoms. When symptoms do occur, they typically begin between 5 and 28 days after an individual has been infected.

For infected individuals with a vagina, the most common symptoms are:

- Vaginal discharge (can be white, grey, yellow, or green in colour, and is usually frothy with an unpleasant smell)
  - Genital redness, burning, and/or itching
  - Frequent urge to urinate
- Pain during urination and/or sexual intercourse

Common symptoms in individuals with a penis include:

- Irritation inside the penis
- Discharge from the urethra
- Burning during urination and/or after ejaculation
- An urge to urinate frequently

## **How Is Trichomoniasis Diagnosed?**

Because the symptoms are so similar to those of other STIs, trichomoniasis cannot be diagnosed by symptoms alone. Lab tests are required to properly diagnose trichomoniasis.

## **What Are the Causes of Trichomoniasis?**

Trichomoniasis is caused by a one-celled organism called *Trichomonas vaginalis* that travels from one person to another through genital contact during sex.

The organism can cause an infection in the vagina and/or the urethra. Once the infection begins, it can easily be spread through unprotected genital contact.

It is not spread through normal physical contact (hugging, kissing, sharing dishes, sitting on a toilet seat, etc.).

## **How Is Trichomoniasis Treated?**

Trichomoniasis can be cured with antibiotics, such as metronidazole or tinidazole.

It is important that both you and your partner(s) are properly tested and take the medication as prescribed.

*Not having any symptoms does not mean that an individual does not have trichomoniasis.*

Sexual intercourse must be avoided until the infection is cured, which takes about a week.

## **What Are the Possible Complications of Trichomoniasis?**

Having a trichomoniasis infection can make it easier to contract other STIs. The inflammation of the genitals that is caused by trichomoniasis can increase your risk of getting HIV as well as other STIs. It also makes it easier for you to spread the virus.

Conditions such as chlamydia, bacterial vaginosis, and gonorrhea may often occur with trichomoniasis.

Untreated infections can result in Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID). Some complications that can arise due to PID include:

- Fallopian tube blockage (due to scar tissue)
  - Infertility
- Chronic abdominal and/or pelvic pain

## **Pregnancy with Trichomoniasis**

Trichomoniasis can cause unique complications in pregnant individuals.

There is an increased chance of delivering the baby prematurely, as well as delivering a baby with a low birth weight. In rare cases, the infection may be passed onto the baby during delivery.

### **What are the Possible Outcomes for an Individual with Trichomoniasis?**

Without treatment, a trichomoniasis infection can be ongoing. However, with treatment, it is usually cured within a week.

If your partner(s) have trichomoniasis, it is possible for you to contract it again. This is why it is important to make sure all of your partners receive treatment, as well as waiting for the infection to clear before having sex.

Symptoms typically go away after a week, and you should see your doctor for a follow-up test for trichomoniasis three months after receiving treatment.

*If you have any further questions regarding sexually transmitted infections or would like to see a health care provider regarding any sexual health matter, please contact us.*

## **Sexual Health Questions? We have Answers!**

### **Location:**

47 St. Clare Avenue, St. John's, NL, A1C 2J9

### **Hours:**

Monday: 9am – 4:30pm

Tuesday: 9am – 4:30pm

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### **Phone:**

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### **Website:**

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