

# The facts about PID (Pelvic Inflammatory Disease)

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## Pelvic Inflammatory Disease

### What is PID?

- PID is the term given to infection of the female reproductive system – the tubes, uterus (womb) and ovaries.
- It is a common and potentially serious complication of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as chlamydia and gonorrhoea. Occasionally PID can occur after certain gynaecological operations.

### How did I get PID?

- PID is common in women under the age of 25 because chlamydia and gonorrhoea infections are common in this age group.
- You can become infected with chlamydia or gonorrhoea by having unprotected sex (not using a condom) with someone who has these infections.
- However tests for STIs are often negative in women with PID.

### How do I know if I have PID?

- The symptoms can be very mild to severe.
- The most noticeable symptoms are:
  - Pain or tenderness in the tummy or lower abdomen.
  - Abnormal vaginal discharge.
  - Heavy or painful periods.
  - Unusual bleeding such as after sex or between periods.
  - Pain during sex.
- These symptoms are especially important if you have had unprotected sex with a new partner in the last 3 months.

### What should I do if I think I have PID?

- If you have had recent unprotected sex with a new partner or have any of the symptoms mentioned above then its time for a sexual health check.
- This involves having a vaginal examination and tests for sexually transmitted infections including chlamydia and gonorrhoea.
- This check can be done at your local sexual health service, GP or FPA clinic.
- There is no specific, single test for PID and the doctor will rely on your symptoms and examination findings to decide if you have PID.

### How is PID treated?

- If your doctor thinks it is very likely you have PID you will be given a course of antibiotics usually before test results are available. This is to lower the risk of any possible long-term complications.
- If you have had PID once, you have a higher than average risk of infertility (difficulty getting pregnant), ectopic pregnancy (baby growing outside the womb) or chronic (long term) pain. If you get it again you are at even greater risk of these possible complications.

It is very important to:

- Finish the course of treatment even if your tests are all clear and you are feeling better.
- Do not have sex again until your treatment is finished and any recent sexual partners are also treated.
- If you don't have a regular partner advise all partners from the last 3 months to get a sexual health check.
- Come back for a follow-up check after treatment.

## How can I avoid PID in the Future?

Most PID in young women is the result of an STI.

- You can prevent these infections by using a condom every time you have sex, especially when you have sex with a new partner.
- Make sure sexual partners are tested and treated.
- The complications of PID get worse with repeated infections so prevention is essential.