

# PELVIC INFLAMMATORY DISEASE (PID)

## What is PID?

PID is an infection usually caused by an untreated sexually transmitted infection (STI) like chlamydia or gonorrhoea. The infection can spread from the vagina and cervix into the uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries and cause inflammation and scarring if not treated.

## How is it transmitted/passed on?

There are several ways in which PID can develop. Sometimes this can be from untreated STIs like chlamydia or gonorrhoea after unprotected sex but also from procedures like an IUD insertion (contraceptive method), childbirth or abortion.

## How would I know if I had PID?

You may have pain in your abdomen (tummy) or pelvic area. You might also have a fever or body chills. You may notice you have pain when having sex or vaginal bleeding or spotting after sex. You could have bleeding in-between your periods or bleeding could be heavier than usual for you. You may notice a change in the colour or amount of your vaginal discharge. Sometimes you can get pain when you urinate (pee), go more often or even find it difficult to go.

You don't need to have all of these symptoms to have PID so it is best to see your doctor and get a check-up if you experience any of these changes.

## How to test for PID?

PID is detected through a physical examination of the vagina, cervix and uterus to check for any inflammation, pain or discomfort. Swabs from the cervix are taken to check for STIs and other infections.

## How is PID treated?

PID is treated with a combination of antibiotics. It's important to complete the course of antibiotics and to avoid having sex until you have finished taking all the antibiotics.

## Telling partners

If PID is caused by an STI then you will need to contact any sexual partners to be tested so they don't pass it on to you or someone else.

You can contact your sexual partners yourself either directly or by sending an anonymous SMS or email using [www.bettertoknow.org.au](http://www.bettertoknow.org.au)

Alternatively, your doctor, nurse or Aboriginal Health Practitioner can contact your sexual partners anonymously for you to let them know they should be tested.

## How can I prevent PID?

STIs which can lead to PID can be prevented by the correct use of condoms or dams with lube when having vaginal, oral or anal sex.

If you are sexually active, you can get a STI check-up when:

- You have your health check (715) – just ask!
- Every 6 to 12 months (if you are under 30)
- When you change sexual partners
- If you have any pain or changes with your genitals or body

**Be prepared!** Remember to always carry condoms (and lube) with you so you have them when you need them. Make sure you regularly check the expiry dates and make sure they are in good condition before you use them.

## Anything else I should know?

If PID is not treated it can cause scarring and damage to your reproductive organs – ovaries, fallopian tubes and uterus - and can make it difficult to get pregnant.

PID can also lead to chronic pelvic pain.

