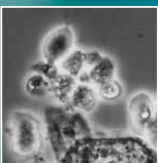


**Sexually Transmitted Diseases**



# **Trichomonas infection**

**Questions & Answers**



Generalitat de Catalunya  
**Agència de Salut Pública  
de Catalunya**

## What is trichomonas infection or trichomoniasis?

This is a common sexually transmitted genital infection caused by the parasite *Trichomonas vaginalis*. It is more common in women than in men.

In women the infection most commonly affects the vagina as well as the urethra (or urinary duct) and in men the urethra.

Trichomoniasis is one of the common causes of abnormal vaginal discharge. However, **the infection often shows no symptoms and may go unnoticed, especially in men.**

The main consequences of the infection are caused by interaction with HIV infection. In fact, **trichomoniasis can make it easier to sexually transmit HIV.**

## How is it transmitted?

**Through sex with an infected person,** whether this is through contact between penis and vagina or vulva-to-vulva contact, due to the exchange of secretions from mucous membranes.

Thus, women can get this infection from infected men or women, whereas men usually contract it only from infected women.

Trichomoniasis, unlike other sexually transmitted infections, cannot be transmitted by oral or anal sexual contact.

### In addition...

- It may be transmitted by sharing sex toys.
- It may be contracted more than once. **Reinfection is common in women.**

Take note that an infected person who has never had symptoms or whose symptoms have disappeared may still infect or reinfect their sexual partner until the infection is treated.

## What are the symptoms?

**Over 50% of infected women usually show signs and symptoms of infection:** abnormal vaginal discharge, irritation and itching in the area of the vulva and vagina, or a burning sensation when urinating.

**Men rarely show signs of infection:** mild abnormal secretion from the penis or discomfort when urinating.

These signs may be similar to other infections. Consult your doctor, who will make a diagnosis.

## How can I find out if I have the infection?

**You need to take specific tests to detect the parasite that causes trichomoniasis.** Usually you need to give a sample of the secretions from the affected area (from the urethra in men and the vagina in women) and also urine from men.

The parasite is harder to detect in men than in women.

## Can a trichomonas infection be cured?

**The infection is curable. The treatment is easy and effective, with antibiotics taken orally.** Taken via the vagina it is much less efficient and can lead to a relapse of the infection.

It is advisable not to consume alcohol during treatment.

### In addition...

**Infected persons and their sexual partners should be treated simultaneously whether they have symptoms or not.** If not, the sexual partner can cause reinfection and thus the treatment will fail.

## How can trichomoniasis be prevented?

Unless both partners know they are not infected, the following is necessary to reduce the risk of infection by trichomonas and most other sexually transmitted infections:

- **Use condoms** (male or female) in sexual intercourse (vaginal, anal and oral).

When sharing sex toys, they must be covered with a condom before use.

- **Avoid having sex under the influence of alcohol or drugs**, as this decreases the perception of risk and may lead to not using a condom or using it incorrectly.
- **Limiting the number of sexual partners**; this is also a preventive measure.

### In addition...

#### To reduce complications, you should:



- **Consult the healthcare professional on finding warning signs of sexually transmitted infection** (injury to the skin or mucous membranes, especially around the genital area, abnormal genital secretions or a burning sensation when urinating) so he can assess the seriousness, and **you should avoid having sex** until then.
- **Do tests to detect other sexually transmitted infections (chlamydia, gonorrhoea, HIV, etc.).** This may be advisable if you have been diagnosed or treated for trichomoniasis or any other sexually transmitted infection, even if you do not have the symptoms. In any case, you should do this if there is any a risk of having been infected.

The health professional will give you specific recommendations.

# Trichomonas infection or trichomoniasis

## Signs and symptoms of infection

The infection begins in the mucous membranes of the vagina or urethra. The symptoms can appear between 5 and 28 days afterwards.

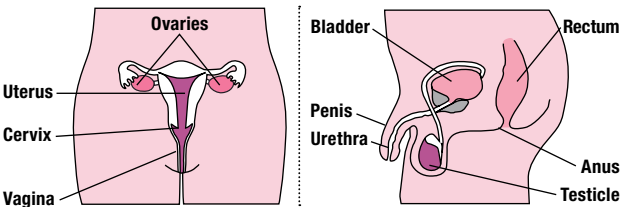
Gender	Infected areas	Possible signs and symptoms
	Vagina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abnormal vaginal discharge: greater, greenish, frothy or with bad odour</li> <li>Irritation and itching in the genital area</li> <li>Discomfort during sexual intercourse or urination</li> </ul> <p>The gynaecological examination carried out by the health professional can show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swelling and redness of the vaginal wall and, in rare cases, of the cervix. In severe cases, there are numerous points of haemorrhage. These may lead to abnormal bleeding.</li> </ul> <p><b>Many women have very discreet symptoms or none at all (up to 50% of cases).</b></p>
	Urethra	
	Cervix	
	Urethra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slight morning secretion from the penis</li> <li>Itching sensation within the urethra</li> <li>Discomfort when urinating</li> </ul> <p><b>Most men have no signs or symptoms.</b></p>

Although the infection can heal without treatment, it often persists. It can therefore still be transmitted over long periods (even years for women).

## Other consequences of the infection

- Vaginal infection increases the risk of contracting HIV through sex.
- The probability of a person infected with HIV transmitting the virus to their sexual partner increases if she has trichomoniasis.
- Infection in pregnant women increases the likelihood of having a premature birth or of giving birth to a baby of low weight.

Note: this table is a summary of the relevant and most probable information for trichomonas infection.



# Sexually Transmitted Diseases

## Don't forget that:

- An individual can be infected and not know about it.
- The use of condoms effectively reduces the risk of acquiring a sexually transmitted infection.
- Early diagnosis and treatment prevent most of the complications of sexually transmitted diseases.

If you have any doubts or if you think that your behaviour puts you at risk of infection, visit one of the public health system's health centres, sexual and reproductive health units or sexually transmitted disease units.

You can also call:

**SIDA**  
**900 212222**  
Informació confidencial i gratuïta

**061** **CatSalut**  
Respon

<http://canalsalut.gencat.cat>