

Trichomoniasis

Trichomoniasis is caused by a parasite called *Trichomonas vaginalis*. This parasite infects the genitalia and urethra (the tube which carries urine from the bladder to the outside) in both men and women.

Signs and Symptoms:

There may be no symptoms. Men and women with trichomoniasis may not know they have an infection.

Women with trichomoniasis may notice:

- changes to vaginal discharge such as smell and/or change of colour
- itch or irritation around the outside of the vagina
- pain in the vagina, especially during sex
- discomfort in the lower part of the abdomen
- burning or stinging when passing urine
- needing to pass urine more often than usual

Men with trichomoniasis may notice:

- discharge from the penis
- burning or stinging when passing urine
- needing to pass urine more often than usual.

Transmission:

Trichomoniasis is spread by unprotected sexual contact with an infected partner. If you find out that you do have trichomoniasis, anyone with whom you have had sex in the past few months will also need to be tested and treated. This is to make sure that they are cleared of the infection and to prevent you from being re-infected. If you feel uncomfortable or embarrassed about telling your partners, a member of your health care team can contact them for you. This is a confidential process and your name will not be mentioned. It is very important for your health, for your partner's health, and the health of other people with whom they have sex that your partners get tested and treated.

Prevention:

Practise safe sex. Always using condoms when you have vaginal or anal sex is the best way to avoid getting trichomoniasis; using water-based lubricant with condoms is recommended.

If you are giving a man oral sex (his penis in your mouth), it will be much safer if the man is wearing a condom. Whether you are male or female, if you put your mouth in contact with your partner's anus or vulva while having sex, you can protect yourself by using a dental dam.

Remember that using condoms not only protects you from STIs, it is also an effective form of contraception. If you do use other forms of contraception (like the pill, diaphragm and IUCD), use condoms as well. If you or your partner has more than one sexual partner and do not use condoms, have regular sexual health check-ups.

Health outcome:

Without treatment the infection has been shown to persist in women for many years and in men for many months. During this time, it can be passed onto sexual partners. Trichomoniasis is likely to increase the risk of acquiring HIV and might affect pregnancy outcomes e.g. premature delivery and low birth weight for babies.

Other resources:

- [Queensland sexual health](https://www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/sexual-health/index.html) (<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/sexual-health/index.html>)

Related content

- [Safe sex](http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/14/188/123/Safe-Sex) (<http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/14/188/123/Safe-Sex>) fact sheet.

Help and assistance:

For more information on trichomoniasis, you can talk to a:

- doctor
- [sexual health clinic](https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/sex-health/services/default.asp) (<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/sex-health/services/default.asp>)
- [family planning clinic](http://www.fpq.com.au/) (<http://www.fpq.com.au/>).