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## Endometritis

Endometritis is an inflammation or irritation of the lining of the uterus (the endometrium). It is not the same as endometriosis.

### Causes

Endometritis is caused by an infection in the uterus. It can be due to chlamydia, gonorrhea, tuberculosis, or a mix of normal vaginal bacteria. It is more likely to occur after miscarriage or childbirth. It is also more common after a long labor or C-section.

The risk for endometritis is higher after having a pelvic procedure that is done through the cervix. Such procedures include:

- D and C (dilation and curettage)
- Endometrial biopsy
- Hysteroscopy
- Placement of an intrauterine device (IUD)
- Childbirth (more common after C-section than vaginal birth)

Endometritis can occur at the same time as other pelvic infections.

### Symptoms

Symptoms may include:

- Swelling of the abdomen
- Abnormal vaginal bleeding or discharge
- Discomfort with bowel movement (including constipation)
- Fever
- General discomfort, uneasiness, or ill feeling
- Pain in lower abdomen or pelvic region (uterine pain)

## **Exams and Tests**

Your health care provider will perform a physical exam with a pelvic exam. Your uterus and cervix may be tender and your provider may not hear bowel sounds. You may have cervical discharge.

The following tests may be performed:

- Cultures from the cervix for chlamydia, gonorrhea, and other organisms
- Endometrial biopsy
- ESR (erythrocyte sedimentation rate)
- WBC (white blood count)
- Wet prep (microscopic exam of any discharge)

## **Treatment**

You will need to take antibiotics to treat the infection and prevent complications. Finish all your medicine if you have been given antibiotics after a pelvic procedure. Also, go to all recommended follow-up visits with your provider.

You may need to be treated in the hospital if your symptoms are severe or occur after childbirth.

Other treatments may involve:

- Fluids through a vein (by IV)
- Rest

Sexual partners may need to be treated if the condition is caused by a sexually transmitted infection (STI).

## **Outlook (Prognosis)**

In most cases, the condition goes away with antibiotics. Untreated endometritis can lead to more serious infections and complications. Rarely, it may be associated with a diagnosis of endometrial cancer.

## **Possible Complications**

Complications may include:

- Infertility
- Pelvic peritonitis (generalized pelvic infection)
- Pelvic or uterine abscess formation
- Septicemia
- Septic shock

## **When to Contact a Medical Professional**

Contact your provider if you have symptoms of endometritis.

Call right away if symptoms occur after:

- Childbirth
- Miscarriage
- Abortion
- IUD placement
- Surgery involving the uterus

## Prevention

Endometritis may be caused by STIs. To help prevent endometritis from STIs:

- Treat STIs early.
- Make sure sexual partners are treated in the case of a STI.
- Follow safer sex practices, such as using condoms.

Women having a C-section may have antibiotics before the procedure to prevent infections.

## References

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