



[Home](#) → [Health Topics](#) → Pelvic Inflammatory Disease

URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/pelvicinflammatorydisease.html>

Pelvic Inflammatory Disease

Also called: PID

What is pelvic inflammatory disease?

Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) is an infection of the uterus, ovaries, and other female reproductive organs. PID causes scarring in these organs. This can lead to infertility [<https://medlineplus.gov/infertility.html>] , ectopic pregnancy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ectopicpregnancy.html>] , pelvic pain, abscesses (a collection of pus), and other serious problems. PID is the most common preventable cause of infertility in the United States.

What causes pelvic inflammatory disease?

Many types of bacteria [<https://medlineplus.gov/bacterialinfections.html>] can cause PID, but it's often caused by sexually transmitted infections [<https://medlineplus.gov/sexuallytransmittedinfections.html>] (STIs). Gonorrhea [<https://medlineplus.gov/gonorrhea.html>] and chlamydia [<https://medlineplus.gov/chlamydiainfections.html>] are the most common causes of PID.

You are at greater risk for PID if you:

- Are sexually active and younger than age 25.
- Have more than one sex partner.
- Douche. Douching can push bacteria into your reproductive organs. It may also hide the signs of PID.
- Have an STI and do not get treated.
- Have had PID or an STI before.

It's not as common, but sometimes using an intrauterine device (IUD) for birth control can increase your risk for PID. However, your risk is usually only during the first three weeks after the IUD is placed inside your uterus.

What are the symptoms of pelvic inflammatory disease?

If you have PID, you may have mild or no symptoms. If you do have symptoms, the most common symptom is pain in the lower abdomen (belly). Other symptoms can include:

- Fever [<https://medlineplus.gov/fever.html>]
- Foul-smelling vaginal discharge
- Bleeding between periods
- Pain or bleeding during sex
- Painful urination (peeing)

See your health care provider if you have any symptoms of PID or if you think you or your partner were exposed to an STI. Early treatment is important. Waiting too long for treatment increases the risk of infertility.

How is pelvic inflammatory disease diagnosed?

There is no one test for PID. To check for PID, your provider may:

- Ask about your medical and sexual history
- Review your symptoms
- Do a pelvic exam [<https://medlineplus.gov/womenshealthcheckup.html>]
- Order blood, urine, and imaging tests [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/sonogram/>]

What is the treatment for pelvic inflammatory disease?

Antibiotics [<https://medlineplus.gov/antibiotics.html>] are used to treat PID. You must take all the medicine, even if your symptoms go away to make sure the infection is cured. You will likely need to follow up with your provider to make sure the treatment is working.

Tell your recent sex partner(s) so they can get tested and treated. Don't have sex until you finish treatment, otherwise you can reinfect each other.

If you're pregnant, have an abscess, or your symptoms don't go away, you may need to have surgery or be hospitalized for treatment.

Treatment cannot fix any permanent damage already done to your internal organs.

If you don't get treated, complications can occur, such as:

- Scar tissue may develop in your fallopian tubes.
- Infertility.
- An abscess may develop in your reproductive organs. If untreated, this could become a life-threatening infection.
- Long-term pelvic or abdominal (belly) pain.

Can pelvic inflammatory disease be prevented?

The best way to protect yourself against STIs is not to have sex.


If you do decide to have sex, a few ways you can lower your risk include to:

- **Practice safe sex** by using a condom every time you have sex, limit your number of sex partners, and ask your partners about their sexual history.
- **Get tested** for chlamydia and gonorrhea every year and ask your partner to get tested.
- **Don't douche** since this can upset the balance of bacteria in your vagina.

Start Here

- **About Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID)** [<https://www.cdc.gov/pid/about/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cdc.gov/pid/es/about/acerca-de-la-enfermedad-inflamatoria-pelvica.html>]
- **Pelvic Inflammatory Disease** [<https://familydoctor.org/condition/pelvic-inflammatory-disease/?adfree=true>]
(American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/condicion/enfermedad-inflamatoria-pelvica-es/?adfree=true>]
- **Pelvic Inflammatory Disease** [<https://womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/pelvic-inflammatory-disease>]
(Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health)
Also in Spanish [<https://espanol.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/pelvic-inflammatory-disease>]

Diagnosis and Tests

- **Laparoscopy** [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/laparoscopy/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/laparoscopia/>]
- **Pelvic laparoscopy - series** [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100131_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100131_1.htm]

Related Issues

- Douching [<https://womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/douching>] (Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health)
Also in Spanish [<https://espanol.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/douching>]

Clinical Trials


- ClinicalTrials.gov: Pelvic Inflammatory Disease [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Pelvic+Inflammatory+Disease%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: The association between dietary fiber intake and pelvic inflammatory disease in... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40682044>]
- Article: Procalcitonin and inflammatory biomarkers in tubo-ovarian abscess: Predicting surgical intervention. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40629735>]
- Article: Chlamydial Prevalence, risk factor and complications among symptomatic pelvic inflammatory disease... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40500823>]
- Pelvic Inflammatory Disease -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Pelvic+Inflammatory+Disease%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+2+Years%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

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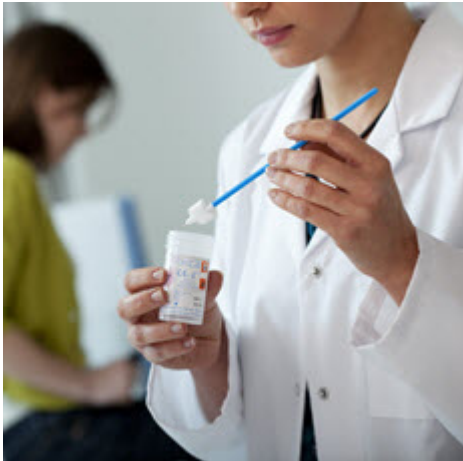
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [<https://www.cdc.gov/>]
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cdc.gov/spanish/>]
- National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases [<https://www.niaid.nih.gov/>] 

Teenagers

- Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/std-pid.html>] (Nemours Foundation)

Patient Handouts

- Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000888.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000888.htm>]
- Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) - aftercare [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000710.htm>]
(Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000710.htm>]



Diagnostic laparoscopy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003918.htm>]

Endometritis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001484.htm>]

Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000888.htm>]

Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) - aftercare [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000710.htm>]

Pelvic laparoscopy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002916.htm>]

Pelvic laparoscopy - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100131_1.htm]

Related Health Topics

Sexually Transmitted Infections [<https://medlineplus.gov/sexuallytransmittedinfections.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Pelvic Inflammatory Disease* is the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases [<http://www.niaid.nih.gov/>]

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