

## WHEN SHOULD YOU SEE YOUR DOCTOR?

See your doctor or seek urgent medical care if you experience:

- Severe pain low in your abdomen
- Nausea and vomiting, with an inability to keep anything down
- Fever with a temperature higher than 38.3 C
- Foul vaginal discharge

If your signs and symptoms persist but aren't severe, see your doctor as soon as possible.

Vaginal discharge with an odour, painful urination or bleeding between menstrual cycles can be associated with a sexually transmitted disease (STD).

If these signs and symptoms occur, stop having sex and see your doctor quickly.

Prompt treatment of an STI can help prevent PID.



### Informing Patients Pamphlet series

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# P I D

## Pelvic Inflammatory Disease

*Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) is an infection of the female reproductive organs. It usually occurs when sexually transmitted bacteria spread from your vagina to your uterus, fallopian tubes or ovaries.*





## What is PID?

Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) is an infection of the reproductive organs in women. The pelvis is in the lower abdomen and includes the fallopian tubes, the ovaries, the cervix, and the uterus. This condition is common and affects millions of women globally every year.

Several different types of bacteria can cause PID, including the same bacteria that cause the sexually transmitted infections (STIs) gonorrhoea and chlamydia. What commonly occurs is that bacteria first enter the vagina and cause an infection. As time passes, this infection can move into the pelvic organs.

PID can become extremely dangerous, even life-threatening, if the infection spreads to your blood. If you suspect that you may have an infection, see your doctor as soon as possible.

## What are the symptoms?

Some women with pelvic inflammatory disease don't have symptoms. For the women who do have symptoms, these can include:

- pain in the lower abdomen (the most common symptom)
- pain in the upper abdomen
- fever
- painful sex
- painful urination
- irregular bleeding
- increased or foul-smelling vaginal discharge
- tiredness

Pelvic inflammatory disease can cause mild or moderate pain. However, some women have severe pain and symptoms, such as:

- sharp pain in the abdomen
- vomiting
- fainting
- a high fever (greater than 101 degrees Fahrenheit)

If you have severe symptoms, call your doctor immediately or go to the hospital. The infection may have spread to your bloodstream or other parts of your body. Once again, this can be a life-threatening condition.

## Are there complications?

Untreated pelvic inflammatory disease might cause scar tissue. You might also develop collections of infected fluid (abscesses) in your fallopian tubes, which could damage your reproductive organs.

Other complications might include:

- Ectopic pregnancy. PID is a major cause of tubal (ectopic) pregnancy. In an ectopic pregnancy, the scar tissue from PID prevents the fertilized egg from making its way through the fallopian tube to implant in the uterus. Ectopic pregnancies can cause massive, life-threatening bleeding and require emergency medical attention.
- Infertility. PID might damage your reproductive organs and cause infertility — the inability to become pregnant. The more times you've had PID, the greater your risk of infertility. Delaying treatment for PID also dramatically increases your risk of infertility.
- Chronic pelvic pain. Pelvic inflammatory disease can cause pelvic pain that might last for months or years. Scarring in your fallopian tubes and other pelvic organs can cause pain during intercourse and ovulation.
- Tubo-ovarian abscess. PID might cause an abscess — a collection of pus — to form in your uterine tube and ovaries. If left untreated, you could develop a life-threatening infection