

Trichomonas Vaginalis

What is it?
How is it transmitted?
How is it treated?

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What is trichomonas vaginalis?

It is a curable sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by a protozoon called *Trichomonas vaginalis*, or TV. Protozoa are tiny germs similar to bacteria.

TV can infect the vagina, urethra (water passage), and underneath the foreskin.

If you have TV we recommend that you have tests for other STIs including chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis and HIV

How is trichomonas vaginalis transmitted?

TV is passed on:

- through unprotected vaginal sex
- insertion of fingers into the vagina
- sharing sex toys if you don't wash them or cover them with a condom each time they are used
- from an infected mother to her baby during normal childbirth (vaginal delivery)

What are the symptoms?

Men and women may not notice anything wrong but they can still pass TV onto their sexual partner. Some may notice one or more of the following:

Women:

- increased vaginal discharge
- an unpleasant vaginal smell
- cystitis or burning pain when passing urine
- vulval itching or soreness
- pain in the vagina during sex

Men:

- a discharge from the tip of the penis
- a burning pain when passing urine
- wanting to pass urine more often than usual
- soreness around the foreskin

How do I get tested for TV?

Women

It is not a routine test in all clinics, but usually tested if you have symptoms. If you do have symptoms, a swab will be taken from the vagina by a doctor or nurse during an internal examination.

Men

In most clinics it is not routine for men to be tested for TV. Men usually have a TV test because their sexual partner has tested positive. A swab will be taken from the tip of the penis. Most of the tests for TV do not work very well in men and this explains why most men with TV infection will test negative.

Some TV test results may be available during your first visit to clinic (by looking at the samples under a microscope). You will be informed about how you will receive your final results before leaving clinic.

Where can I get a check-up?

From Sexual Health Sheffield - all tests and treatments are free.

How is TV treated?

TV can be treated with antibiotics. Occasionally a second course of antibiotics is needed if your symptoms don't go away. Without treatment, the infection can last for months.

Important Information about your treatment

The antibiotics are highly effective if taken correctly. The antibiotics don't interfere with your contraception.

You will be advised not to drink any alcohol while taking your antibiotics and for at least 48 hours after finishing the treatment. This is because alcohol may cause the antibiotics to give you severe headache and feeling of sickness. The antibiotics would still work if you get this reaction.

Tell the doctor or nurse if you are pregnant, might be or are breast feeding as it may affect the antibiotics that you are given.

Should I tell my partner(s)?

If the test shows that you have TV then it is important that your current sexual partner and any other recent partners are also tested and treated. Sexual Health Sheffield will help with this and your confidentiality is protected.

Can I still have sex?

It is strongly advised that you do not have any sexual intercourse, including vaginal, anal or oral sex until you and your partner(s) have both finished the treatment and any follow-up treatment. This is to help prevent you being re-infected or passing the infection on to someone else.

How can I protect myself from trichomonas and other sexually transmitted infections?

It is possible to get trichomonas and other sexually transmitted infections by having sex with someone who has the infection but has no symptoms. The following measures will help protect you from trichomonas and most other sexually transmitted infections including HIV and chlamydia. If you have a sexually transmitted infection they will also help prevent you from passing it on to your partner:

- Use condoms every time you have penetrative vaginal or anal sex
- If you have oral sex, use a condom to cover the penis. Free condoms, femidoms and lube are available from Sexual Health Sheffield
- Any genital to genital contact between partners could pass on STIs. Using condoms before sexual contact can help prevent infection
- If you are not sure how to use condoms correctly visit:
www.sexualhealthsheffield.nhs.uk
- If you share sex toys, wash or sterilise them or cover them with a new condom before anyone else uses them

What happens at Sexual Health Sheffield?

When you attend for your appointment, you will be asked to provide the following:

- Your name and how we can contact you - any details you provide will be treated confidentially
- During your visit you will be asked personal information so we can provide the relevant and appropriate care
- We have a duty of care to all our patients, so if you are 17 or under you will be asked relevant questions to assess your safety. If staff are concerned, they may talk to you about what to do about this and may contact other appropriate agencies. Sexual Health Sheffield will not tell your parents or carers that you have visited Sexual Health Sheffield

This is the service you can expect when you attend Sexual Health Sheffield:

- All advice, information, tests, condoms and treatments, including contraception are free at Sexual Health Sheffield
- No one should judge you because of your sexual behaviour or lifestyle
- All our services are confidential
- All Sexual Health Sheffield workers are appropriately and fully trained NHS staff
- All tests are optional; no examination will take place without your consent
- Please ask questions to ensure you fully understand what services have been offered, what tests carried out and what treatments given
- You can have a chaperone to help you feel more comfortable – please ask

- Our friendly and professional staff are here to help you. We will give you as much support as you need (particularly if you need help on how to inform any partners)

If you feel that we have not met the above or want to give us any other feedback, please contact us via:

www.sth.nhs.uk/patients/tell-us-what-you-think

Further information

www.sexualhealthsheffield.nhs.uk

0114 226 8888

NHS Choices website:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/Sexually-transmitted-infections/Pages/Introduction.aspx



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