

## What is trichomonas?

*Trichomonas vaginalis* (commonly known as 'trike') is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by a parasite. It can cause infection of the vagina or cervix (neck of the womb), the urethra (urine passage).

Trichomonas is one of the most common STIs in some parts of the world, but it is not as common in Australia.

## How do you get trichomonas?

- trichomonas is most commonly passed on through unprotected vaginal sex with someone who already has the infection - it is less commonly passed on with oral or anal sex
- the parasites can live for a few hours on damp towels, so can be spread by sharing towels
- trichomonas cannot be spread by contact with toilet seats

## How can I protect myself from trichomonas?

The best way to prevent getting trichomonas and other STIs is to have safer sex. This means using condoms every time you have vaginal, oral or anal sex.

## What are the symptoms of trichomonas?

Up to 50% of those with vaginal trichomonas infections have no symptoms, and the majority of those with urethral infections (in the penis) have no symptoms.

If you do get symptoms, they usually appear 4-20 days after you get the infection. Symptoms may include:

- frothy yellow or green vaginal discharge
- fishy vaginal smell
- bleeding after sex
- bleeding between periods
- vaginal burning and pain during sex
- itchiness or soreness of the vulva (external genitals)
- burning or pain when passing urine
- discharge from the opening of the penis

Even when you have no symptoms, you can still have the infection and pass it on to your partners.

## How do I get tested for trichomonas?

A urine sample or swab from the vagina can be tested for trichomonas. Your doctor or nurse will explain how to collect the test.

## How is trichomonas treated?

Antibiotics are used to treat infection with trichomonas. You will be advised to have no sex at all, even with a condom, until 7 days after you have started your antibiotics and any symptoms have resolved. It is important that you take the antibiotics as directed by your doctor. Your partner(s) needs to be treated too.

## What is contact tracing?

If you have trichomonas and have unprotected sex it is likely that you will pass the infection on to your partner. Your doctor will explain who needs to be contacted and treated if you have a trichomonas infection.

It is important to let your sexual partners know if you have trichomonas so that they can also get tested and treated. Contact tracing can be done confidentially. There are websites that let you send a free anonymous text message or email – just ask your doctor or nurse about it.

## What about pregnancy and trichomonas?

If you are pregnant, trichomonas may cause your baby to be born early or to be underweight. The infection can be safely treated during pregnancy. The infection is rarely passed on from mother to baby during birth.



## For more information

- Visit your nearest Family Planning Australia clinic [fpnsw.org.au/clinics](https://fpnsw.org.au/clinics)
- Chat to a nurse via Talkline – 1300 658 886 or [fpnsw.org.au/talkline](https://fpnsw.org.au/talkline)
- National Relay Service (for people who are d/Deaf, hard of hearing or have speech communication difficulties) – 133 677
- Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) – 131 450
- NSW Sexual Health Infolink – [shil.nsw.gov.au](https://shil.nsw.gov.au) or 1800 451 624
- Let Them Know – [letthemknow.org.au](https://letthemknow.org.au)