



What is Pelvic Inflammatory Disease?

PID occurs most frequently in women between the ages of 15 and 25 years old.

1. Introduction

Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) is a serious infection of one or more organs in the female reproductive tract, including the uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries. If left untreated, PID can cause scar tissue that grows between internal organs, eventually leading to permanent damage to the reproductive tract. The symptoms of PID can be subtle, so many women may not even realize they have it until they have trouble getting pregnant or develop chronic pelvic pain.

2. Causes

PID is caused by a bacterial infection that spreads from the vagina or cervix higher up through the reproductive tract. The two most common bacteria come from Gonorrhea and chlamydia and cause about 90% of all cases. PID can also occur as a result of normal bacteria entering the reproductive organs. This may happen after:

- + Childbirth
- + Pelvic surgery
- + Miscarriage
- + Insertion of an IUD

3. Symptoms

PID often does not cause obvious symptoms, and it may resemble other health problems. Some symptoms are:

- + Pain or tenderness in the lower abdomen and pelvis
- + Abnormal vaginal discharge
- + Painful, frequent or difficult urination
- + Bleeding between periods and after sex
- + Painful and heavy periods
- + Discomfort or pain during sex
- + Chills or fever
- + Nausea and vomiting

4. Complications

The longer PID goes untreated, the more serious it becomes. The infection will cause scar tissue to form in the fallopian tubes, leading to a number of complications, including:

- + Ectopic pregnancy
- + Infertility
- + Chronic pelvic pain
- + Tubo-ovarian abscess, which can develop into a life-threatening infection

Did you know?

PID affects about 5% of women in the United States and causes infertility in more than 100,000 people.

For more information on PID and supportive resources, please visit [womenshealth.gov](https://www.womenshealth.gov).

References:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/pelvic-inflammatory-disease/symptoms-causes/syc-20352594>

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/9129-pelvic-inflammatory-disease-pid>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK499959>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pelvic-inflammatory-disease-pid>