

DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

Managing Trichomoniasis

Trichomoniasis (“trich”) is a common sexually transmitted infection. Talking with your doctor about the condition is an important way to address concerns and take charge of your sexual health. Asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your trichomoniasis. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here’s what they mean.

Metronidazole	The most commonly prescribed antibiotic for treating trich, which is quite effective if prescribed and used correctly. Metronidazole is usually taken twice a day for five to seven days or in a single, large dose.
Antigen Test	An antigen test is done to identify organisms, bacteria, fungi, or viruses that cause a disease. Antigen testing can diagnose trich if the bacteria that causes it is present.
At-Home Testing	Several companies offer at-home testing for STIs, including trich. These tests are similar to what is available at your doctor’s office. The only difference is with the at-home home test, you administer the sample. Testing for trich includes urine testing strips and vaginal and rectal swabs. These samples are performed at home and then mailed or dropped off to a lab for analysis. Testing kits are available at pharmacies and online for purchase.
Douching	Douching involves cleaning out the vagina with water or other fluids. Doctors do not recommend douching as it may lead to health problems, including vaginal infections and sexually transmitted infections, including trich.
Pelvic Exam	For women, the common way to make a diagnosis of trich is by physical examination of the pelvic area by a gynecologist and taking a sample of vaginal fluid to be checked under a microscope for presence of a parasite associated with trich.
<i>Trichomonas Vaginalis</i>	Trich is caused by an infection with a protozoan parasite called <i>Trichomonas vaginalis</i> . The parasite passes from the infected person to the uninfected person during sexual intercourse.
Urethritis	Inflammation of the urethra, the tube that carries urine from the bladder to outside of the body. Trichomonas is one cause of urethritis. Urethritis caused by trich is treated with antibiotics.
Vaginal Discharge	Vaginal discharge is common with Trich. Discharge is usually a green or yellow color. It may also appear frothy and have a fishy smell.
Wet Preparation	Fluid samples, including vaginal discharge from women and urethral discharge from men, are examined under a microscope to determine if someone has trich. A diagnosis is confirmed if the presence of a parasite is detected. Samples in men are not always accurate.

Questions to Ask

These questions will help you start a conversation with your doctor about how to best manage your trichomoniasis.

About Symptoms

- What does vaginal discharge look like?
- Is itching a symptom?
- Is pain during sex normal?
- Are urinary tract symptoms to be expected?

About Causes & Risk Factors

- How do you get trichomoniasis?
- I am female, can I pass trich to my female partner?
- Does douching increase my risk for trich?
- Is vaginal intercourse the only way trich is transmitted?

About Diagnosis

- How accurate is the wet preparation test?
- Do you need to test for other STIs?
- What are my at-home testing options?
- Does my partner need to be tested?

About Treatment

- What if no treatment is sought?
- How long will it take for the infection to clear up completely?
- Will treatment hurt my unborn baby?

About Living With Trichomoniasis

- How can I manage pain and itching?
- Should I avoid sexual activity during treatment?
- What precautions should I take to protect my unborn child?
- How can I protect myself in the future?
- How do I talk to my partner about testing?
