



**NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S**  
*When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.*

**Helping Hand™**

*Health Education for Patients and Families*

## Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID)

Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) is an infection in the uterus, the fallopian tubes, or the ovaries (Picture 1). It is often caused by a sexually transmitted infection (STI), like chlamydia or gonorrhea. It can also be caused by vaginal infections that are not sexually transmitted.

Early medical treatment can help prevent:

- continued abdominal pain
- damage to the fallopian tubes
  - This damage could cause someone born female to be sterile (unable to have children).
- infection from spreading to other parts of the body

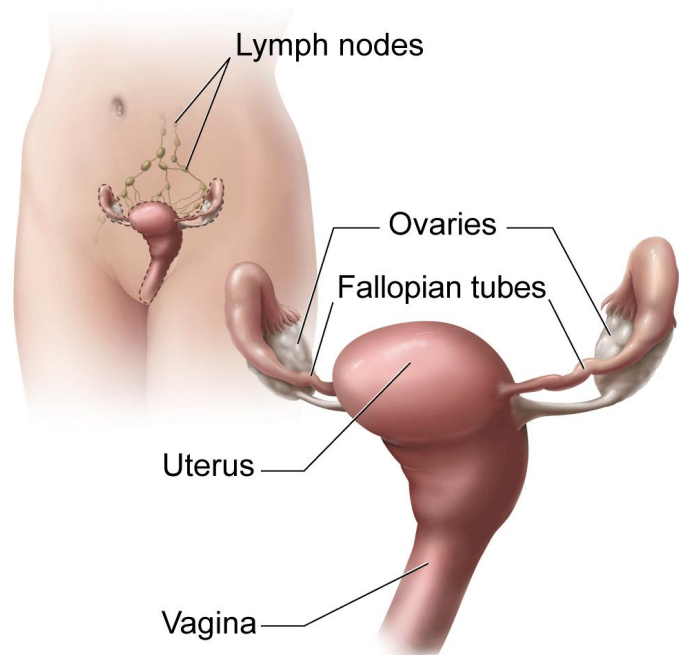
### Signs and symptoms

Early symptoms may be:

- discharge coming from the vagina
- pain when urinating (peeing)
- lower abdomen pain
- unusual bleeding from the vagina that is not your period

Later symptoms may be:

- fever and chills
- pain when walking
- strong cramps
- pain in the abdomen (belly)



Source: National Cancer Institute  
Creator: Alan Hoofring/Don Bliss

**Picture 1** The female reproductive system showing the uterus, fallopian tubes, and ovaries.

## Diagnosis

To diagnose (find out if you have) PID, your health care provider will perform a pelvic exam (Picture 2).

- You will wear a hospital gown and lie on a padded table for the exam.
- Your health care provider will press on your abdomen. This is to find where the pain is coming from.
- The provider will use a metal or plastic speculum (SPEK-you-lum) to look inside your vagina. You may feel some pressure with the exam.
- They will use their hands to feel your uterus.
- If needed, samples of vaginal discharge will be taken with a cotton swab. The swabs will be sent to the lab for more testing.



**Picture 2** Preparing for a pelvic exam.

## After the exam

- Your health care provider will decide if any more tests or treatments are needed.
- If you are prescribed antibiotic medicine, take it until **all** of it is gone, even if you feel better.
- You may have some light spotting (bleeding) after the exam.

## Preventing future infection

Abstinence (not having sex) is the best way to avoid PID and STIs. If you do have sex, these things might help prevent the spread of STIs:

- Limit your number of sexual partners. Know your partner(s) and their sexual history.
- **Use a condom** every time you have sex, the whole time you have sex.
- Have an extra condom with you in case the one you are using breaks.
- Get tested for STIs and HIV. Having an STI or HIV can increase your risk of infections.

## Follow-up

Follow up with your health care provider in \_\_\_\_\_ days. If your child needs a provider, call the Nationwide Children's Hospital Referral and Information Line at (614) 722-6200.

If you have any questions, ask your health care provider.