

Cervicitis/Vaginitis

What is cervicitis? How do you get cervicitis?

Cervicitis is an infection of the cervix, which is the lower part of your uterus. The cervix is at the top of the vagina. Cervicitis is one kind of sexually transmitted infection (STI). STIs are infections that are spread through having sex with someone who has an STI. It is hard to tell who has an STI because many look healthy and feel well. They may not even know that they are infected, and they may have caught the infection months or even years earlier. Cervicitis can happen after sex involving penetration. It can also happen from other sexual contact, even without intercourse.

What are the dangers?

Cervicitis is usually caused by chlamydia or gonorrhea. These infections can spread up the uterus and cause a more severe STI called pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), which can make it harder to get pregnant or may cause pregnancy problems in the future.

What are the symptoms?

It is important to remember that many people who have an STI have no symptoms. This is why it is important to practice safe sex and to see your medical provider twice yearly to make sure you don't have an infection so you can stay healthy. Symptoms of cervicitis include unusual discharge from the vagina, pain or burning with urination, or pain during intercourse.

How can you prevent cervicitis?

Avoiding sex is one sure way to prevent cervicitis. If you choose to have sex, talk about it with your partner. Always use a condom if having sex with a male partner or using sex toys. Do not use Vaseline or creams with the condom. Limit the number of sex partners that you have. Go to see your medical provider if you have any symptoms, in addition to routine six-month check-ups.

How is cervicitis treated?

Treatment involves taking medicine to kill the germs that are causing the infection. In order to get better it is important to do the following:

1. Take all of your medicine as directed by the medical provider.
2. Do not have sex until your treatment is finished.
3. Do not give your medicine to anyone else.
4. Go back to your medical provider when instructed to do so.
5. Tell everyone that you have had sex with in the preceding two months that you might have an STI and that they need to be tested by their medical provider.

Call your medical provider or return to the Emergency Department if:

1. Your symptoms are not getting better in 24-48 hours.
2. You start to have abdominal pain.

3. You start to have or have worsening of your vaginal bleeding.
4. You are unable to take your medicine.
5. You develop a high fever or chills.