

## **Pelvic Inflammatory Disease**

Today, you were diagnosed as possibly having Pelvic Inflammatory Disease, or PID for short.

### **What is PID?**

PID is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) of the uterus (womb), fallopian tubes, and/or ovaries. It is most commonly caused by having sex with someone who has an STI. PID usually causes some belly pain. It may also cause a thick vaginal discharge, vaginal bleeding, fever, burning with urination or pain with intercourse.

It is hard to tell who has an STI because many people with STIs look healthy and feel well. Boys in particular may not have any symptoms at all. They may not even know that they are infected, even if they've been infected for a long time.

### **How is PID treated?**

Treatment involves taking medicine to kill the germs that are causing the infection. It is very important to follow all of the medical provider's instructions so that you can prevent problems from happening later. After leaving the ER, you need to do the following:

1. Take all of your medicine as directed by the medical provider.
2. Have a follow-up visit with your regular provider within 3 days of your ER visit.
3. Take ibuprofen every 6 hours or acetaminophen every 4 hours as needed for your pain
4. Drink plenty of fluids, such as Gatorade, to be sure you don't get dehydrated
5. Do not have sex until you have finished all of your antibiotics and your symptoms are resolved.
6. Do not give your medicine to anyone else.
7. 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 and treated by their medical provider. If your partners aren't treated you could get another infection in the future.
8. Get tested for HIV if you weren't already tested in the ER.

### **What can you expect for the next several days?**

Your belly pain may last for another few days. You can take ibuprofen or acetaminophen if you continue to have pain. You need to drink plenty of fluids and rest. You may have some stomach upset or even vomiting from the medicine you are taking. Try not to take your medicine on an empty stomach; this will help decrease these problems. If you vomit within 15 minutes of taking your medicine, take it again. If you continue to have trouble taking your medicine because of vomiting, or if you are having trouble taking your medicine for any other reason, call your medical provider or come back to the ER.

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

1. You have worsening of your abdominal pain.
2. You have worsening of your vaginal bleeding (if you had that when you went to the ER)
3. You are unable to take your medicine for any reason, including vomiting.
4. You are unable to keep any fluids down
5. You develop a high fever or chills.

### **How do Health Care Providers make the diagnosis of PID?**

PID can be a hard diagnosis to make, and there is no one test that will tell us for sure that you have PID. The medical provider or nurse caring for you uses what he or she found when examining you, along with blood or urine tests, to decide whether or not there is a good chance

you have PID. Sometimes, we treat patients for PID who might not have it; this is because of problems associated with not treating this infection.

**What can happen if PID is not treated?**

If PID is not treated, it can develop into more serious infections, such as an abscess. Also, it can cause problems later on, such as abdominal pain and problems becoming pregnant.

**How can you prevent PID?**

Avoiding sex is one sure way to prevent PID. If you choose to have sex, talk about it with your partner. Always use a condom. Do not use Vaseline or creams with the condom. Limit the number of sex partners that you have. Go to see your medical provider as soon as possible if you have any symptoms. Have regular STI and HIV testing every year or any time you have a new partner or symptoms **and** get vaccinated.