



# TRICHOMONIASIS

## WHAT IS TRICHOMONIASIS?

Trichomoniasis is a genital infection caused by the organism *Trichomonas vaginalis*. Trichomoniasis is usually detected in women, and very rarely detected in men. It is quite uncommon in Australia, and most often found in women who have recently had sex outside Australia. Recent evidence however, has demonstrated a higher rate of infection in the indigenous community in Australia.

## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?

Some women do not have any symptoms but may still be infected with *Trichomonas*. Symptoms may include a frothy yellow-green vaginal discharge, unpleasant vaginal odour, vaginal itching and burning. Symptoms in men may include a discharge from the penis and burning when urinating.

## HOW IS IT TRANSMITTED?

*Trichomonas* is transmitted by having unprotected sexual intercourse with an infected person.

## WHAT OTHER PROBLEMS CAN IT CAUSE?

Trichomoniasis during pregnancy may lead to low birth weight babies and prematurity.

## HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

In order to diagnose Trichomoniasis in women, a practitioner must perform a vaginal examination and take a swab from the vagina. The sample is then examined under the microscope in the laboratory.

In men, if a penile discharge is present a swab is taken and examined under the microscope. If a discharge is not present a urine sample can be collected instead. Men are not routinely tested for *Trichomonas* at Melbourne Sexual Health Centre, unless their partner is found to be infected.

## HOW IS IT TREATED?

At the Melbourne Sexual Health Centre Trichomoniasis is treated with antimicrobial tablets. This may be with either Metronidazole 2g immediately with food or Tinidazole 2g immediately with food. These medications may cause nausea or stomach upset, and taking them with food may reduce these side effects.

Alcohol should be avoided for 48 hours after taking these medications. A metallic taste in the mouth may occur when taking these medications, however it will disappear soon after the treatment is completed.

It is important that all sexual partners are also treated, regardless of whether or not they have symptoms.

## HOW CAN TRICHOMONIASIS BE PREVENTED?

Practicing safe sex by always using condoms is the best way of preventing infection with Trichomoniasis, as well as most other Sexually Transmissible Infections.

This fact sheet is designed to provide you with information on *Trichomonas*. It is not intended to replace the need for a consultation with your doctor. All clients are strongly advised to check with their doctor about any specific questions or concerns they may have. Every effort has been taken to ensure that the information in this pamphlet is correct at the time of printing.