

Trichomonas

Trichomonas is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) of the vagina and urethra. We don't commonly encounter trichomonas at University of Oregon, but it does exist in our community. Your clinician will help you determine if screening is recommended for you.

What is trichomonas?

Trichomonas is a protozoa that infects the cervix and vaginal canal and the lining of the penis (urethra). Once it gets inside the body, it can cause chronic inflammation and irritation which makes a person much more vulnerable to other STIs.

How common is trichomonas?

There are about 2.3 million people with trichomonas in the United States at any given time¹.

How common is trichomonas at UO?

We can only estimate since many students don't come in and get tested. University Health Center does find trichomonas a few times every term, but it isn't common.

How could I be exposed to trichomonas?

Trichomonas requires direct contact between infected mucous membranes, the moist soft parts of the body. So if a penis or vagina is in contact with another penis or vagina without a barrier device, there is risk of infection. Trichomonas, for reasons not fully understood, does not seem to infect the anus and rectum, so anal sex is less risky.

If I have been exposed to trichomonas, how long until I might have symptoms?

Most of the time, there are no symptoms after an infection. But symptoms can appear as early as five days after infection. Symptoms can come and go, and the infection can last for years in your genital tract if untreated.

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Trichomonas Statistics.
<http://www.cdc.gov/std/trichomonas/stats.htm>

What are the symptoms of trichomonas?

Most of the time, trichomonas infections have no symptoms at all. In fact, about 70 percent of people have no symptoms. That's why screening (testing when you have no symptoms) is so important. Infection may cause burning with urination, discomfort, or discharge at the tip of one's penis; or it can cause vaginal irritation, pain with sex, abnormal discharge, and spotting.

How do you test for trichomonas?

Based on recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), University Health Center only screens for trichomonas infection in certain higher-risk vaginal cases. Patients are given a swab for their own vaginal self-collection.

How long after infection will my test turn positive?

Testing at one week after infection detects most cases of trichomonas, and testing at one month detects nearly all cases.

How will you notify me of my test results?

We relay negative results via a secure message to you via myUOHealth student portal.

If you test positive, we will call you by phone. If you don't answer, we'll leave a generic message to call us back to discuss your recent test results.

What happens if I test positive for trichomonas?

It is important to know that trichomonas is treatable and curable. But we understand that a positive test may still cause fear or anxiety.

We will schedule an appointment for you with a UHC clinician as soon as possible. At that visit, you will get all the information you need, have your questions answered, and get treated.