

This describes an infection in a woman's pelvic region.

### **What to look for**

With acute pelvic inflammatory disease (PID):

- severe pain in the lower abdomen
- vaginal discharge
- fever

With chronic PID:

- recurrent pain in the lower abdomen,
- backache
- irregular periods
- pain during intercourse.
- infertility.
- heavy, unpleasant-smelling vaginal discharge.

If not treated promptly PID can become very serious and often fatal.

PID can be either acute or chronic. Acute PID comes on suddenly and is usually severe. Chronic PID is an infection that may cause only recurrent mild pain and sometimes backache. Some women have no obvious symptoms.

### **Causes**

PID is caused by bacteria from contaminated semen that swim from the vagina into the uterus. Most cases of PID used to be caused by the organism responsible for the sexually transmitted disease gonorrhoea, or by chlamydia. Recently, researchers have linked other organisms to PID.

The risk of PID increases after childbirth, miscarriage, abortion, the insertion of an (IUD) for contraception. Your doctor will give you a pelvic examination and if there is an infection, he or she will take a sample for examination.

### **Traditional Treatment**

Because PID is such a serious ailment, you must consult your doctor who will recommend the best course of action.

### **Dietary Considerations**

To strengthen your immune system and help speed your recovery, eat plenty of whole foods.

Vitamin supplements may also enhance your immune system. Especially, vitamin A, vitamin C, and vitamin B complex.

### **PREVENTION**

- Use contraception (condoms, diaphragm, or a cervical cap with spermicides).
- Avoid putting anything in your vagina for two to three weeks after an abortion, a miscarriage, or a D and C and for six weeks after childbirth. - no intercourse, douching, and no tampons.
- Do not use an IUD.
- If you have a history of pelvic infections or have several sexual partners, use barrier methods of contraception and avoid intercourse during your menstrual period.
- Get prompt treatment for any sexually transmitted disease.

### **When to seek further professional advice**

- you experience sudden abdominal pain
- you experience any abnormal menstrual bleeding
- you experience a vaginal discharge that is foul-smelling